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THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO
St. Mark

THE NEW TESTAMENT
COMMENTARY

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THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO

St. Mark

WITH COMMENTARY BY

E. H. PLUMPTRE, D.D.

DEAN OF WELLS

EDITED BY

CHARLES JOHN ELLICOTT, D.D.

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PREFACE

THE present volume, though it professes to be reproduced from the quarto edition of Bishop Ellicott's "New Testament Commentary for English Readers," is to a large extent a new work. In the Notes on St. Mark's Gospel in that edition it was enough for the large mass of matter common to that Evangelist and St. Matthew to refer to what had been said in the Notes on the latter Gospel. Such an arrangement was obviously inadmissible in a volume published separately. I have accordingly thought it expedient, though a mere transfer of Notes from one Gospel to the other would not have met the exigencies of the case, to make free use of what appears in the quarto edition in the Notes on St. Matthew; adapting it to its new position, and giving due prominence to all that is specially characteristic of St. Mark.

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Deanery, Wells.

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INTRODUCTION

I. The Writer.—There is but one person of the name of Mark, or Marcus, mentioned in the New Testament, and, in the absence of any evidence to the contrary, it may reasonably be assumed that the Gospel which bears his name is ascribed to him as being, directly or indirectly, its author. The facts of his life as they are gathered from the New Testament may be briefly put together. He bore also the Hebrew name of John, *i.e.*, Joannes, or Jochanan (Acts xii. 12, 25; xv. 37). The fact that he took a Latin and not a Greek surname suggests the probability of some point of contact with Jews or others connected with Rome. As was natural, when he entered on his work among the Gentiles the new name practically superseded the old, and in the Epistles (Col. iv. 10; 2 Tim. iv. 11; Philem. verse 24; 1 Pet. v. 13) he is spoken of as "Mark" only. He was cousin to Barnabas, and was therefore, on his mother's side probably, of the tribe of Levi (Col. iv. 10; Acts iv. 36). His mother bore the name of Mary, or Miriam, and it may be inferred from the fact that her house served as a meeting-place for the disciples at Jerusalem (Acts xii. 12), that she, like her kinsman, was one of the prominent and wealthy members of the Apostolic Church. St. Peter speaks of him as his "son" (1 Pet. v. 13), and it is a natural inference from this that he was converted by that Apostle to

the new faith, but whether this was during our Lord's ministry on earth or after the day of Pentecost must remain matter for conjecture. When Paul and Barnabas return from Jerusalem to Antioch (Acts xii. 25) he accompanies them, and this may be taken as evidence that his sympathies were at that time with the wider work which they were carrying on among the Gentiles. So, when they were sent forth, on their first missionary journey, they chose him as their "minister," or attendant (Acts xiii. 5). His function, as such, was probably to provide for their personal wants in travelling, to assist in the baptism of new converts, and to arrange for their meeting to "break bread" in the Supper of the Lord. For some unrecorded reason, possibly want of courage, or home-sickness, or over-anxious care about the mother whom he had left at Jerusalem, he drew back at Perga in Pamphylia from the work to which they were sent, and returned home (Acts xiii. 13).* We find him, however, again

* It was doubtless on account of this desertion that we find the strange epithet of "poltroon" (*kolobodactylos*) connected with St. Mark's name by some early Christian writers (Hippol. *Philosoph.* vii. 30). He was, by those who took St. Paul's view of his conduct, like the soldier who cuts off his thumb in order to get free from service. The figurative epithet was afterwards the basis of a legend (Pref. to St. Mark in *Cod. Amiat.*) that he had literally mutilated himself in order to

at Antioch, after the council at Jerusalem, and he had so far regained his uncle's confidence that he was willing to take him once more as a companion in his missionary labours (Acts xv. 37—39). To that course, however, St. Paul would not agree, and the result was that the two friends who had so long been fellow-workers in the cause of Christ were divided after a sharp contention.

From this point onwards we get but few glimpses of the writer of the Gospel. He accompanied Barnabas (A.D. 52) in his work among the Jews and Gentiles of Cyprus (Acts xv. 39). About eight years later he was with St. Peter in the city on the banks of the Euphrates which still bore the old name of Babylon, and there must have met Silvanus, or Silas, who had taken his place as the companion and minister of St. Paul (1 Pet. v. 12, 13). It is possible that this may have led to a renewal of the old intimacy between him and the Apostle of the Gentiles, and about four years later (A.D. 64) we find him with St. Paul at Rome, during the Apostle's first imprisonment (Col. iv. 10; Philem. verse 24), and there, it may be noted, he must have met his brother Evangelist St. Luke (Col. iv. 14). He was then, however, on the point of returning to the Asiatic provinces, and contemplated a visit to Colossæ (Col. iv. 10). Two years later (A.D. 66), accordingly, we find him at Ephesus with Timotheus, and the last mention of his name shows that St. Paul had forgotten his former want of steadfastness in the recollection of his recent services,

and wished for his presence once again as being "profitable for ministering"* (2 Tim. iv. 11).

To these facts, or legitimate inferences, we may now add the less certain traditions that have gathered round his name. Epiphanus (*Contr. Hær.* p. 314) makes him one of the Seventy whose mission St. Luke narrates (x. 1), and says that he was of those who turned back when they heard the hard saying of John vi. 60, 66. Eusebius (*Hist.* ii. 15; vi. 14) states, on the "authority of the ancient elders" and of Clement of Alexandria, that he was with St. Peter at Rome, acting as his "interpreter," or secretary, and that he was sent on a mission from Rome to Egypt (*Hist.* ii. 16). There, according to Jerome (*de Vir. illust.* 8), he founded the Church of Alexandria, became bishop of that church, and suffered martyrdom at the hands of the people on the feast of Serapis, in the fourteenth year of Nero, A.D. 68, about three years after the death of St. Peter and St. Paul. In A.D. 815 his body was said to have been taken to Venice, and the stately cathedral in the Piazza of St. Mark in that city was dedicated to his memory. Some recent commentators identify him conjecturally with "the young man with the linen cloth round his naked body" of Mark xiv. 51. (See Note on that passage.)

II. The Authorship of the Gospel.—St. Mark is named by Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis (*circa* A.D. 169), on the authority of a certain "John the Presbyter," as writing down exactly, in his character as Peter's interpreter, "what-

avoid the responsibilities of the priesthood.

* This rather than "for the ministry" is the sense of the Greek.

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ever things he remembered, but not in the order in which Christ spoke or did them, for he was neither a follower nor hearer of the Lord's, but was afterwards a follower of Peter." The statement is probable enough in itself (Euseb. *Hist.* iii. 39), and receives some additional weight from the fact that the city of which Papias was Bishop was in the same district as Colossæ, which Mark, as we have seen, meant to visit (Col. iv. 10). In another passage, above referred to, Eusebius (*Hist.* ii. 15; v. 8) speaks of him as having been asked to write by the hearers of St. Peter at Rome, and that the Apostle at first acquiesced in, and afterwards sanctioned, his doing so. The same tradition appears (A.D. 160-225) in Tertullian (*Cont. Marc.* iv. 5). It receives some confirmation from the language of the second Epistle ascribed to St. Peter. The Apostle there promises that he will "endeavour" that those to whom he writes may have these things (*i.e.*, the facts and truths of the gospel) in remembrance, that they might know that they had not "followed cunningly-devised fables," but were trusting those who had been eyewitnesses, at the Transfiguration and elsewhere, of the majesty of Christ (2 Pet. i. 15, 16). Such a promise seems almost to pledge the Apostle to the composition of some kind of record. Mark, we have seen, was with him when he wrote his first Epistle, perhaps also when he wrote the second, and it would be natural that he should take down from his master's lips, or write down afterwards from memory, what he had heard from him. It may be added that the comparatively subordinate position occupied by St. Mark in the New Testament

records makes it improbable that his name should have been chosen as the author of a book which he did not really write. A pseudonymous writer would have been tempted to choose (let us say) Peter himself, not Peter's attendant and interpreter.

The Gospel itself, we may add, supplies some internal evidence in favour of this hypothesis:—(1.) It differs from St. Matthew, with which to a great extent it runs parallel in the facts narrated, in giving at every turn graphic descriptive touches which suggest the thought that they must have come in the first instance from an eyewitness. These are noticed in detail in the Notes on the Gospel, and here it will be enough to mention a few of the more striking instances. Thus, *e.g.*, we have (*a*) the "very early in the morning, while it was yet night," of i. 35, as compared with "when it was day" in Luke iv. 42; (*b*) there being no room, "not so much as about the door," in ii. 2; (*c*) the "taking off the roof and digging a hole in it" in ii. 4; (*d*) the "making a path by plucking the ears of corn" in ii. 23; (*e*) the "looking round with anger" in iii. 5; (*f*) the "taking Him, even as He was, into the ship," and the "lying in the stern on the pillow" (iv. 36, 38); (*g*) the account of the manner in which the Gadarene demoniac had "burst asunder" his chains and "worn away" his fetters (v. 4), and how he was "in the mountains crying and cutting himself with stones" (v. 5); (*h*) the "green grass," and the "sitting in ranks and companies by hundreds and by fifties" (vi. 39, 40); (*i*) the "exceeding white as snow so as no fuller on earth can whiten

them" (ix. 3); (*j*) the "Jesus beholding him, loved him" of the young ruler (x. 21); (*k*) the "young man with the linen cloth round his naked body" (xiv. 51); and many others of a like character (2.) As pointing in the same direction, we may note the instances in which St. Mark, and he alone, reproduces the very syllables which our Lord uttered in Aramaic. Whether they were an exception to His usual mode of speech or not may be an open question, but as connected with His works of healing they had the character of words of power for those who heard them, and so fixed themselves in their memories. So we have the TALITHA CUMI of v. 41, the EPHPHATHA of vii. 34, the RAB-BONI in the Greek of x. 51, the BOANERGES of iii. 17, the ABBA of xiv. 36, the CORBAN of vii. 11, and, though here in common with St. Matthew, the ELOI, ELOI, LAMA SABACHTHANI of xv. 34. (3.) So, too, in a few cases, St. Mark gives names where the other Gospels do not give them: Levi is the son of Alphæus (ii. 14); the ruler of the Synagogue, not named by St. Matthew, is Jairus (v. 22); the blind beggar at Jericho is Bartimæus, the son of Timæus (x. 46); the mother of James and John is Salome (xv. 40); Simon the Cyrenian is the father of Alexander and Rufus (xv. 21). (4.) Some have seen grounds for the inference thus suggested in St. Mark's omission of the promise made to Peter in Matt. xvi. 17—19, and of his "weeping bitterly" after he had denied his Master, but the proof in this case seems somewhat precarious.

III. The first readers of the Gospel.—The position which St.

Mark occupied in relation both to St. Paul and St. Peter—his connection with the former being resumed, as we have seen, after a long interval—would make it probable that he would write with a special eye to Gentile rather than Jewish readers; and of this the Gospel itself supplies sufficient evidence in the full explanation of the customs of the Jews as to ablutions and the like in vii. 3, 4, in the explanation of the word Corban in vii. 11, perhaps also in his description of "the river of Jordan" in i. 5. A closer study suggests the thought, in full agreement with the tradition mentioned above, that he wrote with a special view to Christians of the Roman Church. He alone describes Simon the Cyrenian as the father of Alexander and Rufus (xv. 21), as though that fact had a special interest for his readers. There is but one Rufus mentioned elsewhere in the New Testament, and he meets us in Rom. xvi. 13 as one who was prominent enough in the church of that city for St. Paul to send a special message of remembrance to him; and it may be inferred, with some likelihood, that the wife or widow of Simon of Cyrene (having previously met St. Paul at Corinth, for some personal knowledge is implied in the words "his mother and mine") had settled with her two sons in the imperial city, and had naturally gained a position of some importance. The very name of Marcus indicates, as has been said, some Latin affinities; and it is noticeable, in this connection, that a larger number of words Latin in their origin appear in his Gospel than in any one of the others. Thus we have him giving the Latin *centurio* instead of the Greek

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ἑκατοντάρχης (*hekatontarches*) in xv. 39, 44, 45; the Latin *speculator* for "executioner" in vi. 27; *grabatus* for bed (this in common with John v. 8, 9, 10) in ii. 4, 9, 11, 12; *quadrans* for "farthing" in xii. 42; a verb formed from the Latin *flagellum* for "scourging" (this in common with Matt. xxvii. 26) in xv. 15; a noun formed from *sex-tarius* for "vessels" in vii. 4; *Prætorium* (this in common with Matt. xxvii. 27 and John xviii. 28) in xv. 16; the *denarius* in vi. 37, xii. 15, xiv. 5 (this, however, is common to all four Gospels); the *legio* (found also in Matt. xxvi. 53, Luke viii. 30) in v. 9; *census* (found also in Matt. xvii. 25, xxii. 17, 19) in xii. 14.

IV. The characteristics of the Gospel.—The distinguishing features of St. Mark's Gospel are, it will be seen—(1) vividness and fulness of detail in narrating the events of the history; (2) compression or omission in dealing with our Lord's discourses. This may have been owing partly to the object which he had in view, writing, it may be, for the instruction of catechumens, for whom he judged this method the most fitting, and partly to the idiosyncrasies of his own character. What we have seen of his life and work would prepare us to accept the latter as, to a great extent, an adequate explanation. One who had been chiefly a "minister" or "attendant" (the latter word is the more accurate rendering of the Greek of Acts xiii. 5) on the two Apostles may well be supposed to have been chiefly distinguished for his activity in service, for the turn of mind which observes and notes particulars, rather than for that which belongs to the student, and de-

lights to dwell on full and developed statements of the Truth. We may see in what he has left us, accordingly, pre-eminently the Gospel of Service, that which presents our Lord to us as in the form of a servant, obedient even unto death (Phil. ii. 7, 8); and so far it forms the complement to that in which St. Matthew presents Him to us pre-eminently in His character as a King. Even the characteristic iteration of the ever-recurring "immediately," "anon," "presently," "forthwith," "by-and-by," "straightway"—all representing the self-same Greek word, occurring not less than 41 times—may not unreasonably be connected with his personal experience. That had been, we may believe, a word constantly on his lips in daily life, the law and standard of his own service, and he could not think of his Lord's work otherwise than as exhibiting the perfect fulfilment of that law, a work at once without haste and without pause. So, too, in another point in which he stands in singular contrast to St. Matthew, the almost entire absence of any reference, except in reporting what had been said by our Lord or others, to any prophecies of the Old Testament—there are but two such references in the whole Gospel (i. 2, 3; xv. 28), as rising out of his own reflection—may be explained in part, perhaps, by the fact that he was writing not for Jews, but for Gentiles, to whom those prophecies were not familiar, and also by the fact that his own life in its ceaseless round of humbler service led him to be less than others a student of those prophecies. Assuming the genuineness of the latter of the two passages just referred to (it is absent from nearly all the best

MSS.), we may, perhaps, trace the connection of thought. Words from that 53rd chapter of Isaiah had been quoted by the Apostle to whom he ministered (1 Pet. ii. 22, 23), at a time when he was with him, in special connection with the work of servants and the duty of obedience, and so his mind had been called to those words, but there does not appear to have been in him, as there was in St. Matthew, a deliberate purpose to trace the fulfilment of prophetic words in the circumstances of our Lord's life and work. He was content to paint the scenes that passed before his mind clearly and vividly, and to leave the teaching which the facts embodied to do its work on the minds of his readers.

V. Relation to St. Matthew and St. Luke.—The Gospels of St. Mark and St. Matthew have so much in common, sometimes with each other only, sometimes with St. Luke also, that it is clear that they must have drawn more or less from a common source. Nothing, however, can be more against the whole tenor of internal evidence than the hypothesis that St. Mark epitomised from St. Matthew, or that St. Matthew expanded from St. Mark. The narrative of the second Gospel is in almost every instance fuller than that of the first, and its brevity is obtained only by the absence of the discourses and parables which occupy so large a portion of the other. On either of these assumptions the perplexing variations in the order of events (comp. *e.g.*, Matt. viii. with Mark i. 4, 5) are altogether inexplicable. What is, with our scanty data, the most probable explanation is, that the matter common to both represents the

substance of the instruction given orally to disciples in the Church of Jerusalem and other Jewish-Christian communities coming, directly or indirectly, under the influence of St. Peter and St. James, as the Apostles of the Circumcision (Gal. ii. 9). The miracles that had most impressed themselves on the minds of the disciples, the simplest or most striking parables, the narratives of the Passion and Resurrection, would naturally make up the main bulk of that instruction. St. Matthew, the publican Apostle, and therefore conversant, as has been said before, with clerkly culture, writing for his own people, closely connected with James the Bishop of Jerusalem, would naturally be one exponent of that teaching. St. Mark, the disciple and "interpreter," or secretary, of St. Peter, would as naturally be another. That they wrote independently of each other is seen, not only in the details above noted, the addition of new facts, the graphic touches of description, but from variations which would be inexplicable on any other assumption; such, *e.g.*, as Mark's "Dalmanutha" (viii. 10) for Matthew's "Magdala" (Matt. xv. 39), "Syro-Phoenician woman" (vii. 26) for "Canaanite" (Matt. xv. 22), "Levi the son of Alphæus" (ii. 14) for "Matthew" (Matt. ix. 9). Short as the Gospel is, too, there is one parable in it (iv. 26—29), and one miracle (vii. 31—37), which are not found in St. Matthew. It is remarkable, moreover, that there are some incidents which St. Mark and St. Luke have in common, and which are not found in St. Matthew: that of the demoniac in chap. i. 23—27, Luke iv. 33—37;

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the journey through Galilee (i. 35—39, Luke iv. 42—44); the pursuit of the disciples (i. 36, 37, Luke iv. 42); the prayer of the demoniac (v. 18, Luke viii. 38); the complaint of John against one that cast out devils (ix. 38, Luke ix. 49); the women bringing spices to the sepulchre (xvi. 1, Luke xxiv. 1). Of these phenomena we find a natural and adequate explanation in the fact that the two Evangelists were, at least at one period of their lives, brought into contact with each other (Col. iv. 10, 14, Philem. verse 24). It is probable, as has been said above, that neither wrote his Gospel in its present form until

the two great Apostles whom they served had entered on their rest; but when they met each must have had the plan formed and the chief materials collected, and we may well think of them as comparing notes, and of the one, whose life had led to less culture, and whose temperament disposed him to record facts rather than parables or discourses, as profiting by his contact with the other, and while content to adhere to the scope and method which he had before marked out for himself, adding here and there what he learnt from his fellow-worker whose "praise was in the Gospel" (2 Cor. viii. 18).

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MARK.

CHAPTER I.—⁽¹⁾ The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; ⁽²⁾ as it is written in

A. D. 26.
ending.

a Mal. 3.1.

the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face,^a which shall prepare thy way before thee.

⁽¹⁾ **The beginning of the gospel.**—The opening words are interesting as presenting a transition stage in the history of the word Gospel, between its earlier sense, as meaning generally the “good news” of the kingdom of God (chap. i. 14; Matt. iv. 23; ix. 35), and the later sense, as a book recording the main facts in our Lord’s life and work. In 1 Cor. xv. 1, 2 Tim. ii. 8, where it clearly includes a narrative of some kind, we have an instance of a like transition. The words “the Gospel of Jesus Christ” (a phrase not used by the other Evangelists) may have been learnt from St. Paul’s frequent use of “the Gospel of Christ” (Rom. xv. 19; 1 Cor. ix. 12, 18; 2 Cor. ii. 12 *et al.*), and are used in a two-fold sense. The Gospel comes from Christ. It has Him for its subject matter. The latter meaning is probably, however, the dominant one in the Apostle’s thoughts.

The Son of God.—This also is significant as to the Church’s faith at the time when St. Mark wrote. He, of whom he speaks, was not a prophet or righteous man only, but was, in the highest sense which could be attached to the words, the

Son of God. If we think of St. Mark as reproducing St. Peter’s teaching (see *Introduction*), we cannot fail to connect the words, thus placed, as they are, in the very title of his Gospel, with the Apostle’s confession in Matt. xvi. 16; John vi. 69.

⁽²⁾ **In the prophets.**—Many of the better MSS. give the more definite reference, “in Esaias the prophet.” On general grounds, however, it seems more probable that the general reference should have been specialised by a transcriber than the reverse, unless, indeed, we suppose that the special reference was generalised, because the first words of the composite quotation came not from Isaiah but from Malachi. With one exception, and that very doubtful as to its genuineness (see Note on chap. xv. 28), this is the only quotation from a prophet made by the Evangelist himself in this Gospel. The fact that St. Mark wrote for Gentiles furnishes a partial explanation of his silence in this respect, as compared with St. Matthew. (See *Introduction*.)

Behold, I send my messenger.—St. Mark opens his

(3) The voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord,"

^a Isa. 40.3;
Luke 3.
4; John
1. 23.
^b Matt. 3.
1.

make his paths straight. (4) John did baptize in the wilderness,^b and preach the

record by applying to the Baptist the prophetic words which St. Matthew (chap. xi. 10, 11) records as applied by our Lord. The words in the Greek are not taken from the LXX. version of Mal. iii. 1, but are a free translation from the Hebrew. In the original it is Jehovah Himself who speaks of His own coming: "Behold, I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me." In the Evangelist's paraphrase it is Jehovah who speaks to the Christ—"I send My messenger, who shall prepare Thy way before Thee." The reference to the prophecy of Malachi in the song of Zacharias (Luke i. 76) had from the first connected it with the Baptist's work, and our Lord in thus adopting that reference, stamped the whole chapter with the character of a Messianic prophecy, and, as such, it was currently referred to in the Church.

(3) **The voice of one crying in the wilderness.**—The imagery of Isa. xl. 3 is drawn from the great strategical works of the conquerors of the East. They sent a herald before them to call the people of the countries through which they marched to prepare for their approach. A "king's highway" (Num. xx. 17; Deut. ii. 27) had to be carried through the open land of the wilderness, valleys filled up, and hills levelled (the words used are, of course, poetical in their greatness), winding by-paths straightened, for the march of the great army. Interpreted in its

spiritual application, the wilderness was the world lying in evil, and the making low the mountains and hills was the bringing down of the spiritual pride of Pharisees and Scribes. When the "poor in spirit" were received into the kingdom of heaven, the valleys were exalted; when soldier and publican renounced their special sins, the rough places were made plain and the crooked straight. Here also St. Mark follows St. Matthew, in seeing the fulfilment of the great prediction of Isa. xl. 3 in the mission of the Baptist. So, it may be noted, had the Baptist himself applied it (John i. 23). He was consciously working out the fulfilment of the opening stages of that great prophecy of the kingdom of God.

It is probable that the stress thus laid upon "the way of the Lord," in the first stage of the Gospel, led to the peculiar use of the term "the way" by St. Luke, to denote what we should call the "religion" of the Apostolic Church (Acts ix. 2; xviii. 25, 26; xix. 9, 23; xxii. 4; xxiv. 14, 22). Those "of the way" were walking in "in the way of the Lord," which had thus been prepared.

(4) **John did baptize.**—The better MSS. give "John the Baptizer came (or *was*) in the wilderness." No other Gospel passes so abruptly, so *in medias res*, into the actual work of the Forerunner. There is no account of the birth or infancy of our Lord, as in St. Matthew and St. Luke; none of the

baptism of repentance for ¹ Or, _{unto} the remission of sins.

pre-existence of the Son of Man, as in St. John. St. Mark is here, as elsewhere, emphatically the Evangelist of action. It does not follow that he was ignorant of the facts, or that he ignored them. The probable explanation of his silence is that he had not come across full records of them as the others had, and was content to leave them to the outline teaching which was imparted to every catechumen in the oral traditions of the Church. The manner in which the Baptist is mentioned here shows that his name was already well known to all readers of the Gospel. So, in like manner, Josephus names him as popularly known by the same title (*Ant.* xviii. 5, § 2), and describes his work as that of a preacher of repentance: "He was a righteous man and called on the Jews to be baptized and to practice virtue, exercising justice to men and piety to God." The symbolism of ablution as the outward sign of inward purification was, of course, derived from the Mosaic ritual. It was ordered for the consecration of the priests (*Ex.* xxix. 4; *Lev.* viii. 6), for the purification of the leper and other unclean persons (*Lev.* xiv. 8; xv. 31, 32). It had received a fresh prominence from the language of *Isa.* i. 16, of *Ezek.* xxxvi. 25, of *Zech.* xiii. 1, and probably (though the date of the practice, which we find among the Jews in the second century after Christ, and which was not likely to have been adopted by them from the Christian Church, cannot be fixed with certainty) from its being used on the admission of proselytes, male or female, from heathenism.

The question asked by the priests and Levites in John i. 25 implies that it was expected as one of the signs of the coming of the Messiah, probably as the result of the prophecies just referred to. That which distinguished the baptism of John from all previous forms of the same symbolism was, that it was not for those only who were affected by a special uncleanness, nor for the heathen only, but for all. All were alike unclean, and needed purification, and their coming to the baptism was in itself a confession that they were so. The baptism was, as the name implied, an immersion, and commonly, though not necessarily, in running water. The neuter form (*baptisma*), it may be noted, is used throughout the New Testament, of the special rite, the masculine (*baptismos*) as in chap. vii. 4, 8, *Heb.* vi. 2, ix. 10, for the less significant "ablutions" or "washings" of the Mosaic code. The special phrase "baptism of repentance" — i.e., the sign of repentance, that which was connected with it, and pre-supposed it—meets us in *Luke* iii. 3 and *Acts* xix. 4. In the former passage we find also "forgiveness of sins" as the result of the baptism; and we cannot doubt, therefore, that then, as evermore, repentance was followed by forgiveness, even though the blood which availed for that forgiveness (*Matt.* xxvi. 28) had not as yet been shed.

In the wilderness.—In *Matt.* iii. 1 this is defined more specifically as the "wilderness of Judæa"—i.e., the wild desert country in the south of the Jordan valley, now known as the *Ghor*, stretching

^(c) And there went out unto him all the land of Judæa,^a and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confess-

^a Matt. 3.

^b Matt. 3.

4.

ing their sins. ⁽⁶⁾ And John was clothed with camel's hair,^b and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild

from the western side of the river to that of the Dead Sea. In John iii. 23, the Baptist is doing his work at Ænon near Salim, probably, *i.e.*, not far from Nablous, and at some distance from the river, and thus it would appear that his preaching was more or less itinerant, the one condition being the presence of sufficient water for the immersion rite.

⁽⁶⁾ **There went out unto him . . .**—We note St. Mark's use of the term "in the river of Jordan," as writing for those who were not familiar with the topography of Palestine. St. Matthew (chap. iii. 5) adds "the region round about Jordan," which, if we take the whole course of the river, would include parts of Peræa, Samaria, Galilee, and Gaulonitis. The expression "*all* Judæa and they of Jerusalem," must, of course, be taken as a popular description of the impression made by his preaching. There were, as we know, whole classes who held aloof from his baptism altogether (Matt. xxi. 25; Mark xi. 3).

Were all baptized.—The Greek tense implies continual succession. Crowd after crowd passed on, and still they came *confessing their sins*—*i.e.*, as the position of the word implies, in the closest possible connection with the act of immersion. The Greek word (sometimes used for "confessing" in the sense of "praising," as in Luke xii. 8), always implies public utterance,

and included, as the plural of the noun seems to show, a specific mention of, at least, the more grievous individual sins.

⁽⁶⁾ **And John was clothed . . .**—The dress was probably deliberately adopted by the Baptist as reviving the outward appearance of Elijah, who was "a hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather" (2 Kings i. 8); and the "rough garment," that had been characteristic of the prophet's life even at a later period (Zech. xiii. 4), as contrasted with the "long garments" of the Pharisees (Mark xii. 38), and the "gorgeous apparel" of the scribes who attached themselves to the court of Herod (Luke vii. 25). The coarse hair of the camel was not often used in manufacture of this kind, and the raiment formed from it would be used only by the poorest class, or, as here, as the mark of a voluntary poverty. The Nazarite vow of Luke i. 15 probably involved long and shaggy hair as well.

Locusts and wild honey.—Locusts were among the articles of food permitted by the Law (Lev. xi. 21), and were and are still used by the poor in Palestine and Syria. Diodorus Siculus (iii. 29) gives an account of a tribe of *Acridophagi*, or locust-eaters, in Arabia. They are commonly salted and dried, and may be cooked in various ways, pounded, or fried in butter, and they taste like shrimps. It is needless, when the facts are so clear,

honey; ⁽⁷⁾ and preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes

I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. ⁽⁸⁾ I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall

to go out of the way to seek the food of the Baptist in the sweet pods of the so-called locust-tree (*Cerantia Siliqua*), with which it has been sometimes identified. The "wild honey" was that found in the hollows of trees (as in the history of Jonathan, 1 Sam. xiv. 25), or in the "rocks" (Deut. xxxii. 13; Ps. lxxxi. 16). Stress is laid on the simplicity of the Baptist's fare, requiring no skill or appliances, the food of the poorest wanderer in the wilderness, presenting a marked contrast to the luxury of the dwellers in towns, or even to the bread and fish which were the staple diet of the Galilean peasants (Matt. xiv. 17; xv. 34). The life of Banus, the hermit-master of Josephus, who lived only on herbs and water (*Life*, c. 2) presented analogous, though not identical, features.

⁽⁷⁾ There cometh one mightier than I.—More accurately, *There cometh He that is mightier than I*. The words are substantially identical with those of Matt. iii. 11, but we note the slight difference—not, as there, "whose shoes I am not worthy to bear," but, as also in Luke iii. 16, "the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose." "Latchet," a word now obsolete, was the "thong" or "lace" with which shoes or sandals were fastened. To stoop down and loosen the sandals was commonly among Jews, Greeks, and Romans alike, the act of the servant who afterwards carried

them, but it expressed more vividly what we should call the menial character of the office, and therefore, we may believe, was chosen by St. Mark. (See *Introduction*.) When our Lord washed the disciples' feet (John xiii. 4, 5), He was taking upon Himself a like menial task which, of course, actually involved the other. The remembrance of the Baptist's words may in part account for St. Peter's indignant refusal to accept such services. The words as spoken by the Baptist could only refer to the expected Christ, the *Lord*, whose way he had been sent to prepare.

Mightier—i.e., as the words that follow show, stronger both to save and to punish; at once the Deliverer and the Judge.

⁽⁸⁾ I indeed have baptized you with water. . . —St. Mark omits the "fire" which St. Matthew joins with the Holy Ghost, possibly as less intelligible to His Gentile readers.

He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.—As heard and understood at the time, the baptism with the Holy Ghost would imply that the souls thus baptised would be plunged, as it were, in that creative and informing Spirit which was the source of life and holiness and wisdom, and which should bring with it a more than ceremonial purity. The words received a fulfilment in the Pentecostal gift of Acts ii. 4, but that gift was but the pledge and earnest of the new birth by water and the

baptize you with the Holy Ghost. ⁽⁹⁾ And it came to pass in those days,^a that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was bap-

A. D. 27.

a Matt. 3.
13.
1 Or, clo-
ven, or,
rent.

tized of John in Jordan. ⁽¹⁰⁾ And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened,¹ and the Spirit like a

Spirit (John iii. 5), which was to be the perpetual inheritance of the Church.

⁽⁹⁾ **And it came to pass.**—St. Mark adds “from Nazareth” to St. Matthew’s more general statement, “from Galilee,” and omits the reluctance of the Baptist to administer the rite of initiation to one from whom, though as yet he knew Him not in the fulness of His divine nature, he felt that he ought rather to have received it. The former fact is significant as showing that the Lord Jesus came neither with the crowds from Judæa, nor yet with the other Galileans, but straight from His own home, and by Himself.

That Jesus came.—We are brought here face to face with the question, Why did the Lord Jesus come to the Baptist? The Sinless One had no sin to confess, no need of repentance. We cannot even ascribe to Him that consciousness of evil which weighs upon the hearts of the saints of God almost in exact proportion to their holiness; yet we must believe that His righteousness was essentially human, and therefore capable of increase, even as He increased in wisdom and stature. Holy as He was at every stage of life in proportion to its capacities, there yet rose before Him height upon height of holiness as yet unattained by His human nature, and after which we may say with reverence He “hungered and

thirsted.” And for that attainment the baptism, which to others was a stepping-stone out of the slough of despond, might well be, in the appointed order of the development of His spiritual life, a means, if not a condition. It was meet that He should fill up the full measure of righteousness in all its forms by accepting a divine ordinance, even though, perhaps, *because* it seemed to place Him in fellowship with sinners.

⁽¹⁰⁾ **He saw the heavens opened.**—Better, as in the margin, *rent open*, St. Mark’s language here, as elsewhere, being more boldly vivid than that of the other Gospels. We are reminded of the prophet’s prayer, “Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens” (Is. lxiv. 1). The narrative implies (1) that our Lord and the Baptist were either alone, or that they alone saw what is recorded. “The heavens were opened to *him*” as they were to Stephen (Acts vii. 56). The Baptist bears record that he too beheld the Spirit descending (John i. 33, 34), but there is not the slightest ground for supposing that there was any manifestation to others. So in the vision near Damascus, St. Paul only heard the words and saw the form of Him who spake them (Acts ix. 7; xxii. 9). That which they did see served, as did the tongues of fire on the day of Pentecost, as an attestation to the consciousness of each, of the reality of the gift imparted, and of its essential character.

dove descending upon him :
 (11) and there came a voice

from heaven, saying, Thou
 art my beloved Son, in

That descent of the Spirit, "as it were a dove," as St. Luke adds (chap. iii. 22), "in bodily form," taught the Baptist, as it teaches us, that the gift of supernatural power and wisdom brought with it also the perfection of the tenderness, the purity, the gentleness of which the dove was the acknowledged symbol. To be "harmless as doves" was the command the Lord gave to His disciples (Matt. x. 16), and when they read this record, they were taught, as we are, "of what manner of spirit they were meant to be.

(11) **A voice from heaven.**—

The words were heard, so far as the record goes, as the sign was seen, by our Lord and the Baptist only. It was a testimony to them, and not to the multitude. The precise force of the latter clause, *in whom I was well pleased*, points (to speak after the manner of men), rather to a definite divine act or thought in the past, than to an acceptance at the moment then present. He who stood there was the beloved Son, in whom, "in the beginning," the Father *was* well pleased. To the Baptist this came as the answer to all questionings. This was none other than the King to whom had been spoken the words, "Thou art my Son," (Ps. ii. 7), who was to the Eternal Father what Isaac was to Abraham (the very term "*beloved son*" is used in the Greek of Gen. xxii. 2, where the English version has "only"), upon whom the mind of the Father rested with an infinite content. And we may venture to believe that the "voice" came as

an attestation also to the human consciousness of the Son of Man. There had been before, as in Luke ii. 49, the sense that God was His Father. Now, with an intensity before unfelt, and followed, as the sequel shows, with an entire change in outward life and action, there is, in His human soul, the conviction that He is "*the Son, the beloved.*"

Here, as elsewhere, it is instructive to note the legendary accretions that have gathered round the simple narrative of the Gospels. Justin (*Dial. c. Tryph.* p. 316) adds that "a fire was kindled in Jordan." An Ebionite Gospel added to the words from heaven, "This day have I begotten thee," and states further, "a great light shone around the place, and John saw it, and said, 'Who art thou, Lord?' and again a voice from heaven, saying, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' And then John fell down, and said, 'I beseech Thee, O Lord, baptise Thou me.' But He forbade Him, saying, 'Suffer it, for thus it is meet that all things should be accomplished.'"

More important and more difficult even than the enquiry why Jesus came to be baptised is the question, What change was actually wrought in our Lord's human nature by this descent of the Spirit? The words of the Baptist, "He giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him" (John iii. 34), imply the bestowal of a real gift. The words that follow here, "He was led by the Spirit" (chap. iv. 1), "The Spirit driveth Him" (verse 12), show, in part, the nature of the change. We may venture to

whom I am well pleased. |

|⁽¹²⁾ And immediately the

think, even in this instance, of new gifts, new powers, a new intuition (comp. John iii. 11), a new constraint, as it were, bringing the human will that was before in harmony with the divine into a fuller consciousness of that harmony, and into more intense activity; above all, a new intensity of prayer, uttering itself in Him, as afterwards in His people, in the cry, "Abba, Father" (Mark xiv. 36; Rom. viii. 15; Gal. iv. 6). There also we may think of the Spirit as "making intercession with groanings that cannot be uttered" (Rom. viii. 26).

⁽¹²⁾ Immediately the spirit driveth him.—The narrative of the Temptation is confessedly one of the most mysterious in the Gospel records. In one respect it stands almost, if not altogether, alone. It could not have come, directly or indirectly, from an eye-witness. We are compelled to look on it either as a mythical after-growth, or as a supernatural revelation of facts that could not otherwise be known; or, lastly, as having had its source in our Lord's own report of what He had passed through. The first of these views is natural enough with those who apply the same theory to all that is marvellous and supernatural in our Lord's life. As a theory generally applicable, however, to the interpretation of the Gospels, that view has not been adopted in this Commentary, and there are certainly no reasons why, rejecting it elsewhere, we should accept it here. Had it been based, as a *mythos* naturally would have been based, upon the narrative of the temp-

tation of the first Adam, in Gen. iii., we should have expected the recurrence of the same symbolism, of the serpent and the trees. Nothing else in the Old Testament, nothing in the popular expectations of the Christ, could have suggested anything of the kind. The ideal Christ of those expectations would have been a great and mighty king, showing forth his wisdom and glory, as did the historical son of David; not a sufferer tried and tempted. The forms of the Temptation (though it does not fall within the scope of this volume to deal with them), still more the answers to them, have, it will be seen, a distinct individuality about them, just conceivable in the work of some consummate artist, but utterly unlike the imagery, beautiful or grand, which enters into most myths. Here, therefore, the narrative will be dealt with as the record of an actual experience. To assume that this record was miraculously revealed to St. Matthew and St. Luke is, however, to introduce an hypothesis which cannot be proved, and which is, at least, not in harmony with their general character as writers. They are, one by his own statement, the other by a natural inference from the structure and contents of his Gospel, distinctly compilers from many different sources, with all the incidental variations to which such a process is liable. There is no reason to look on this narrative as an exception to the general rule. The very difference in the order of the temptations is, as far as it goes, against the idea of a supernatural revelation. There remains, then,

spirit driveth him into the wilderness.^a ⁽¹³⁾ And he ^{a Matt. 4. 1} was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted

the conclusion that we have in the narrative that which originated in some communication from our Lord's own lips to one of His disciples, His own record of the experience of those forty days. So taken, it will be seen that all is coherent, and in some sense (marvellous as the whole is), natural, throwing light on our Lord's past life, explaining much that followed in His teaching.

Each narrator expresses the same fact in slightly different language. St. Matthew (iv. 1), "Was led up of the Spirit." St. Luke (iv. 1), "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, was led in the wilderness." St. Mark, more vividly, "Immediately the Spirit driveth Him into the wilderness." What is meant by such language? The answer is found in the analogous instances of seers and prophets. St. John was "in the Spirit on the Lord's day" (Rev. i. 10). The Spirit "lifted up" Ezekiel, that from his exile by the banks of Chebar he might see the secret sins of Jerusalem (Ezek. viii. 3). The "Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip" (Acts viii. 39). Those who spake with tongues spake "by the Spirit" (1 Cor. xiv. 2). The result of this induction leads us to think of the state so described as one more or less of the nature of ecstasy, in which the ordinary phenomena of consciousness and animal life were in great measure suspended. The gift of the Spirit had on the human nature of the Son of Man something of the same overpowering mastery that it has had over others of the sons of men.

A power mightier than His own human will was urging Him on, it might almost be said He knew not whither, bringing Him into conflict "not with flesh and blood," but with "principalities and powers in heavenly places" (Eph. vi. 12.)

⁽¹³⁾ And he was there in the wilderness. — St. Mark compresses the history by omitting the several forms of the Temptation. The reasons for that omission we can only conjecture. He may not have heard the history; he may have thought it not suited for the minds of those to whom he wrote. Peculiar to him are (1) the use of "Satan" instead of "the devil;" (2) the statement that Jesus was "with the wild beasts." In our Lord's time these might include the panther, the bear, the wolf, the hyena, possibly the lion and the serpent. The implied thought is partly that their presence added to the terrors of the Temptation, partly that in His being protected from them there was the fulfilment of the promise in the very Psalm which furnished the Tempter with his chief weapon, that the true child of God should trample under foot "the lion and the adder," the "young lion and the dragon" (Ps. xci. 13.).

Forty days.—Here we have an obvious parallelism with the fasts of Moses (Ex. xxxiv. 28) and Elijah (1 Kings xix. 8), and we may well think of it as deliberately planned. Prolonged fasts of nearly the same extent have been recorded in later times. The effect of such a fast on any human organism, and therefore on our Lord's real humanity,

of Satan ; and was with | the wild beasts ; and the

would be to interrupt the ordinary continuity of life, to produce, as in Acts x. 10, something like the state of ecstasy, and quicken all perceptions of the spiritual world into a new intensity. It may be noted that St. Luke (vi. 2) describes the Temptation as continuing through the whole period, so that what is recorded was but the crowning conflict, gathering into one the struggles by which it had been preluded.

Tempted of Satan.—We are brought, at the outset of the Gospel narrative, face to face with the problem of the existence and personality of the power of evil. Here that existence and personality are placed before us in the most distinct language. Whatever difficulties such a view may be thought to present, whatever objections may be brought against it, are altogether outside the range of the interpreter of Scripture, whose function is to set forth, in their fulness, the thoughts of the writer with whom he deals, rather than to pass judgment on the belief which they involve. It may be urged that the writers of what we call the Scriptures have inherited a mistaken creed on this point (though to this all deeper experience is opposed), or that they have accommodated themselves to the thoughts of a creed which they did not hold (though of such an hypothesis there is not a particle of evidence), but it would be the boldest of all paradoxes to assert that they do not teach the existence of an evil power whom they call the Enemy, the Accuser, the Devil. Whence the name came, and how the belief sprang up, are,

on the other hand, questions which the interpreter is bound to answer. The name, then, of devil (*diabolos*, accuser or slanderer) appears in the LXX. version of 1 Chron. xxi. 1, Job i. 6, ii. 1, Zech. iii. 1, as the equivalent for the Hebrew Satan (= the adversary). He appears there as a spiritual being of superhuman but limited power, tempting men to evil, and accusing them before the Throne of God when they have yielded to the temptation. In Wisd. ii. 24, the name is identified with the Tempter of Gen. iii., and as that book belongs to the half-century before, or, more probably, the half-century after, our Lord's birth, it may fairly be taken as representing the received belief of the Jews in His time.

Into conflict with such a Being our Lord was now brought. The temptations which come to other men from their bodily desires, or from the evils of the world around them, had had no power over Him, had not brought even the sense of effort or pain in overcoming them. But if life had passed on thus to the end, the holiness which was inseparable from it would have been imperfect at least in one respect: it would not have earned the power to understand and sympathise with sinners. There was, as the Epistle to the Hebrews teaches, a divine fitness that He too should suffer and be tempted even as we are, that so He might "be able to succour them that are tempted" (Heb. ii. 18).

The scene of the Temptation was probably not far from that of the Baptism, probably, too, as it implies solitude, on the eastern rather

angels ministered unto him. ⁽¹⁴⁾ Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee,^a preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, ⁽¹⁵⁾ and saying, The time is ful-

A.D. 30.
ending.

^a Matt. 4.
12.
^b Matt. 4.
18.

filled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel. ⁽¹⁶⁾ Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee,^b he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into

than the western side of the Jordan. The traditional Desert of Quarantania (the name referring to the forty days' fast) is in the neighbourhood of Jericho. The histories of Moses and Elijah might suggest the Wilderness of Sinai, but in that case it would have probably been mentioned by the Evangelists.

And the angels ministered unto him.—In St. Matthew's narrative this is brought before us as coming at the close of the Temptation. Here, however, the tense of the verb implies its continuance, or its recurrence at intervals during the whole period. He felt, in His human soul as others have felt, that He was not alone in the conflict, and that those who were with Him were more than they that were against Him (2 Kings vi. 15).

⁽¹⁴⁾ **Now after that John was put in prison.**—St. Mark agrees with St. Matthew in omitting all our Lord's early ministry in Galilee and Jerusalem as recorded in John ii.—v., and takes the imprisonment of the Baptist as his starting-point. That imprisonment is assumed here to be known as one of the conspicuous facts in the history of the period; but the facts connected with it are not related till chap. vi. 17—20.

⁽¹⁵⁾ **The time is fulfilled.**—The words are not found in the

parallel passages of the other Gospels, and are interesting as embodying the same thought as St. Paul's "in the fulness of time" (Gal. iv. 4; Eph. i. 10). So, too, St. Mark adds "believe the gospel" to the simple "repent" of St. Matthew, and gives "the kingdom of God," probably as being more intelligible to his Gentile readers, instead of "the kingdom of heaven" characteristic of that Evangelist.

⁽¹⁶⁾ **As he walked by the sea of Galilee.**—In no part of the Gospel history is it more necessary to remember St. John's record as we read that of the Three, than in this call of the disciples. Here, everything seems sudden and abrupt. There we learn that those who were now called had some months before accepted Jesus as the Christ (John i. 35—43), and had, some or all of them, been with Him during His visit to Jerusalem. Simon had already received the surname of Cephas, or Peter (= the Rock). Putting these facts together, we have something like a clear outline picture of their previous life. The sons of Jona and the sons of Zebedee had grown up in Bethsaida (probably on the north-west shore of the Lake of Galilee), and were partners in their work as fishermen. The movement of Judas of Galilee, in his assertion of national independence, had probably served to

the sea: for they were fishers. ⁽¹⁷⁾ And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.

⁽¹⁸⁾ And straightway they

forsook their nets, and followed him. ⁽¹⁹⁾ And when he had gone a little farther thence, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were

quicken their expectations of a good time coming, when they should be free from their oppressors. When they heard of the preaching of the Baptist, they joined the crowds that flocked to hear him, and received his baptism of repentance. Then they were pointed to the Lamb of God, and received Him as the Christ. Then for a short time they were His companions in His journeyings. (John i. 35—42; ii. 2, 12, 22; iv. 8). When He began the first circuit of His Galilean ministry He was alone, and left them to return to their old calling. They could not tell whether He would ever care to use their services again, and it was under these circumstances that the new call came. St. Matthew's narrative and St. Mark's (i. 16—20) agree almost verbally; St. Luke's presents more difficulty. Is it another and fuller version of the same facts? or, if different, did what he records precede or follow the call which they relate? The first view seems the most probable.

⁽¹⁷⁾ Come ye after me . . . —The command came, as we have seen, to those who were not unprepared. Short as it was, it was in some sense the first parable in our Lord's teaching, the germ of an actual parable (Matt. xiii. 47). It suggested a whole circle of thoughts. The sea is the troubled and evil world (Isa. lvii. 20), and the souls of men are

the fish that have to be caught and taken from it, and the net is the kingdom of God, i.e., the Church of Christ. The figure had been used before (Jer. xvi. 16; Amos iv. 2; Hab. i. 14, 15), but then it had presented its darker aspect, and the "fishers of men" were their captors and enslavers. The earliest extant hymn of the Church, by Clement of Alexandria, at the end of his Treatise on "Christ as the Instructor" (*Pædagogus*), dwells on the image with a rich and suggestive playfulness. Christ is thus addressed:—

"Fisher of men, the blest,
Out of the world's unrest,
Out of sin's troubled sea
Taking us, Lord, to Thee;
Out of the waves of strife,
With bait of blissful life,
Drawing Thy nets to shore
With choicest fish, good store."

The sacrifice of the disciples in leaving "all that they had," seems, perhaps, small as compared with others in the history of saints; yet to leave all, to give up the life of home, and its regular occupations, requires, in any case, an effort more or less heroic; and beyond it there lay the future, as yet undiscerned, with all its possible trials and sufferings, to which, by that one act, they pledged themselves. How they afterwards thought of it themselves, we see from Matt. xix. 27.

in the ship mending their nets. ⁽²⁰⁾ And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him. ⁽²¹⁾ And they went into Capernaum; ^a and straight-

b Matt. 7.
28.

A.D. 31.

a Matt. 4.
13.

way on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught. ⁽²²⁾ And they were astonished at his doctrine: ^b for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes. ⁽²³⁾ And there was

⁽²⁰⁾ **With the hired servants.**—Peculiar to this Gospel, and of some interest as throwing light on the relative social position of the sons of Zebedee as possibly higher than that of the sons of Jona.

⁽²¹⁾ **And they went into Capernaum.**—Here St. Mark's narrative ceases to run parallel with that of St. Matthew, and agrees almost verbally with Luke iv. 31—37. We may, perhaps, without much risk of error, refer the common element to the fact that the two Evangelists were brought together in Rome (Col. iv. 10, 14) before either of them had written his Gospel. The office of teaching in the synagogue was one not confined to any special ministers, but might be undertaken by any who were looked on as qualified for the work. So St. Paul is invited to teach in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia (Acts xiii. 15). So our Lord stood up in the synagogue at Nazareth, both to read the lesson from Isaiah and expound it (Luke iv. 16, 17).

Straightway.—The frequent recurrence of this adverb, often disguised in the English version by needless variations as "immediately," "anon," "by-and-by," should be noticed as we proceed. It occurs forty-one times in

the Gospel; nine times in this first chapter. This also may be noted as characteristic of the writer, who, himself active and prompt, as an attendant or minister (Acts xiii. 5; 2 Tim. iv. 11), was emphatically the Evangelist of action, writing what has been called the Gospel of Service. (See *Introduction*.)

⁽²²⁾ **And they were astonished.**—The verbal agreement with Matt. vii. 28 suggests the thought either that St. Mark had heard or read that passage, or that the impression was one which was felt more or less strongly throughout our Lord's ministry. For "doctrine" read *teaching*. Stress is laid, as in Matt. vii. 28, on the manner rather than the thing taught. He spoke, not as the scribes did, reporting the traditions, often conflicting, of older scribes, but as a Prophet who spoke the words which His Father had given Him to speak (John iii. 11; v. 19.) Both the verbs are in the tense which describes continuous action.

⁽²³⁾ **An unclean spirit.**—The phrase occurs in all the first three Gospels (not in St. John's), but with special frequency (eleven times as compared with twice in St. Matthew and six times in St. Luke) in this. As in most Eastern cities, in both ancient and modern

in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; ^a and he cried out, ⁽²⁴⁾ saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. ⁽²⁵⁾ And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. ⁽²⁶⁾ And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a

a Luke 4.
32.

loud voice, he came out of him. ⁽²⁷⁾ And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him. ⁽²⁸⁾ And immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee. ⁽²⁹⁾ And

times, madness had an immunity from restraint, and the demoniacs seem to have mingled, if they chose, with the crowd of worshippers in the synagogue. The nature of the state thus characterised will be better described in the Notes on chap. v. 2. See also *Excursus* on Demoniac possession.

⁽²⁴⁾ **What have we to do with thee?**—The cry is identical with that of the Gadarene demoniacs (chap. v. 7; Matt. viii. 29). Here, as there, the possessed man has a preternatural intuition of our Lord's greatness.

The Holy One of God.—The name occurs, as applied to Christ, only here, in the parallel passage of Luke iv. 34, and in the better MSS. of John vi. 69. It probably had its origin in the Messianic application of "Thy Holy One" in Ps. xvi. 10; lxxxix. 19; Isa. xlix. 7. Its strict meaning is "the Holy One whom God owns as such," who has attained, i.e., the highest form of holiness. It adds to the significance of the title that it was used absolutely—

"the Holy One," or "the Holy One of Israel"—of the Eternal, the Lord of Israel. (Job vi. 10; Isa. xliii. 15; xlv. 11; 2 Kings xix. 22 *et al.*)

⁽²⁵⁾ **Hold thy peace.**—Literally, *be still, be gagged*. The same verb is used in the calming of the winds and waves in chap. iv. 39, and of the "putting to silence" of the Sadducees in Matt. xxii. 34.

⁽²⁶⁾ **He came out of him.**—St. Luke adds the fact "and hurt him not."

⁽²⁷⁾ **What new doctrine is this?**—A various reading gives a different structure, "What thing is this? A new doctrine with power. And He commandeth even the unclean spirits . . ." "Doctrine" is, as elsewhere, the teaching taken as a whole, including manner as well as substance.

⁽²⁸⁾ **And forthwith.**—Again we have St. Mark's characteristic word, as in the "immediately" of verse 28, and in the "anon" of verse 30.

A comparison of St. Mark's narrative with those of St. Matthew

forthwith,^a when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house

^a Matt. 8. 14.

of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. ⁽³⁰⁾ But Simon's wife's mother lay

and St. Luke as regards the events that followed, with the apparent notes of succession in each case, is enough to show, once for all, the difficulty of harmonising the Gospel narratives with any certainty.

ST. MATTHEW.

ST. MARK.

ST. LUKE.

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| (1.) The leper (viii. 1—4). | (1.) Peter's wife's mother (i. 29—31). | (1.) Peter's wife's mother (iv. 38, 39). |
| (2.) The servant of the centurion (viii. 5—13). | (2.) The leper (i. 40—45). | (2.) The leper (v. 12—15). |
| (3.) Peter's wife's mother (viii. 14, 15). | (3.) The stilling of the storm (iv. 35—41). | (3.) The servant of the centurion (vii. 1—10). |
| (4.) The excuses of two disciples (viii. 18—22). | (4.) The Gadarene demoniac (v. 1—20). | (4.) The stilling of the storm (viii. 22—25). |
| (5.) The stilling of the storm (viii. 23—27). | — | (5.) The Gadarene demoniac (viii. 26—39). |
| (6.) The Gadarene demoniacs (viii. 28—33). | — | (6.) The excuses of two disciples (ix. 57—62). |

Three conclusions may fairly be received as all but certain. (1.) The independence of each record. It is scarcely conceivable that St. Mark or St. Luke would have departed so widely from St. Matthew's order had they had his Gospel before them. (2.) The derivation of all three from earlier records, written or oral, each embracing some only of the acts or discourses of our Lord. (3.) The absence of any direct evidence as to the order of these events, so that each writer was often left to his own discretion, or to some internal principle of grouping.

In dealing with such cases, therefore, while the parallel narratives in the other Gospels will be noticed, so far as they make the record here more vivid and complete, there will seldom be any attempt to discuss elaborately the order in which they stand.

The house of Simon and

Andrew . . . —The fact that Andrew was a joint tenant of the house, and that the two sons of Zebedee were welcomed as guests, may be noted as a touch of the vividness in detail characteristic of St. Mark.

⁽³⁰⁾ Simon's wife's mother. —The fact of St. Peter's marriage has not unnaturally been almost unduly prominent in the Protestant argument against the enforced celibacy of the clergy. "Here," it has been said, is the Apostle from whom the Bishop of Rome claims succession, married when called to his office, and never separated from his wife (comp. 1 Cor. ix. 5; and probably 1 Pet. v. 13), and yet Rome declares the marriage of priests to be unlawful, and stigmatises it as worse than concubinage." Telling as it may sound, however, it is after all only an *argumentum ad hominem*. Had the case been otherwise, we should not have admitted

sick of a fever, and anon they tell him of her. ⁽³¹⁾ And he came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up; and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered

unto them. ⁽³²⁾ And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils. ⁽³³⁾ And all the

that the celibacy of the chief of the Apostles was a ground for compelling all bishops, elders, and deacons of the Church to follow his example. And all that can be urged, as the case stands, is that there is an inconsistency in accepting these facts, and yet treating marriage as *incompatible* with the sacred office of the ministry. The Church of Rome might answer, that experience, or the teaching of the Spirit, or the moral authority of the saints and Fathers of the Church, outweighed the inference from St. Peter's example, and the question must be discussed on wider ethical and social, as well as Scriptural, grounds. In that argument, it is believed, those who advocate Christian liberty (1 Cor. vii. 7, 32; ix. 5) as most in harmony with the mind of Christ are not likely to get the worst of it. The Roman theory that St. Peter's life, after his call to the Apostleship, was like that described in 1 Cor. vii. 29, is a purely *à priori* inference from the assumed higher holiness implied in such a life. The later traditions of the Church represent Peter's wife as sharing his martyrdom.

Sick of a fever.—St. Luke, with a kind of medical precision, adds, "with a *great* fever," and that they (Peter, John, and the others) asked Him about her, as if consulting about a case of which they almost despaired.

⁽³¹⁾ **And she ministered unto them.**—The fact is stated as showing the completeness of the work of healing. The "great fever" had not left behind it its usual sequel of weakness and exhaustion. The act probably involved the preparation of their evening meal, and of their resting-place for the night.

⁽³²⁾ **And at even.**—Or, as St. Luke has it, "While the sun was setting." There were two reasons why the time should be thus specified. (1) It was natural that the sick should be brought in the cool of the evening, rather than in the scorching heat of the afternoon; and (2) it was the Sabbath, and the feeling which made the Pharisees question the lawfulness of a man's carrying the bed on which he had been lying (John v. 10), would probably have deterred the friends of the sick from bringing them as long as it lasted. But with sunset the Sabbath came to a close, and then they would feel themselves free to act. The prominence given to "those that were possessed with devils," both by St. Matthew and St. Mark, shows that it was the work of the Sabbath morning (verses 21—27) that had most impressed itself on their minds. The special features in St. Mark are (1) the fuller description, in verse 33, that "all the city was gathered together at the door;" and (2) the characteristic omission of St. Matthew's

city was gathered together at the door. ⁽³⁴⁾ And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils to speak,¹ because they knew him. ⁽³⁵⁾ And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out,

¹ Or, to say that they knew him.

and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed. ⁽³⁶⁾ And Simon and they that were with him followed after him. ⁽³⁷⁾ And when they had found him, they said unto him, All men seek for thee. ⁽³⁸⁾ And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns,

reference to the prophecy of Isa. liii. 4.

⁽³⁴⁾ And suffered not the devils to speak.—St. Luke (iv. 41) gives the reason of the prohibition more distinctly. The demoniacs had cried out, "Thou art the Son of God." They knew that He was the Christ. And the Son of Man was unwilling to receive that testimony—felt, it may be, that the wild frenzied cries would be a stumbling-block in the way of faith, rather than a help to it. (Comp. St. Paul's conduct under like circumstances in Acts xvi. 18.)

⁽³⁵⁾ A great while before day.—Literally, *very early, while it was yet deep night*. The note of time is peculiar to St. Mark. Prayer seems to have been sought now, as at other times, after a day of extraordinary and exhausting labour. (Comp. Matt. xiv. 23.) The natural inference is that the intensity of the emotion of prayer had made sleep impossible, and that He rose, while others in the house were still slumbering, and sought the refreshment of the cool morning air, and the solitude of the open country—the "wilderness"—in which He might hold communion with the Father.

⁽³⁶⁾ Simon and they that

were with him.—This part of the narrative is given by St. Luke also, but not by St. Matthew. The definite statement who they were that followed after Him is, however, peculiar to St. Mark; while St. Luke alone gives their motive: "They stayed Him that He should not depart from them." They would fain have kept Him at Capernaum, that He might teach them and heal their sick. This is to some extent, perhaps, implied in the words "All men seek for Thee."

⁽³⁸⁾ Let us go into the next towns.—The word translated "towns" occurs here only. It is a compound word, "village-cities," and seems to have been coined to express the character of such places as Bethsaida, Chorazin, and others on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, which were more than "villages," yet could hardly, as being unwalled, be classed as "cities."

That I may preach there also.—St. Luke gives more fully, "to publish the good news of the kingdom of God." The word "preach" has here its full significance of "proclaiming," doing a herald's office.

For therefore came I forth.—In this form the words might

that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth. ⁽³⁹⁾ And he preached in their synagogues through-

a Matt. 8.
2

out all Galilee, and cast out devils. ⁽⁴⁰⁾ And there come a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling

refer simply to His leaving Capernaum; But the report in St. Luke, "for therefore *was I sent*," connects them with His mission as a whole. In any case, however, the disciples, in this stage of their progress, would hardly enter, as we enter, into the full meaning of that mission. To them His "coming forth," even as His being "sent," would be as from His home at Nazareth, not as from the bosom of the Father.

⁽³⁹⁾ **And he preached.**—Literally, *and he was preaching*. The words indicate, like those in Matt. iv. 23, a wide and continuous activity. It will be noted that St. Mark, for the third time in this chapter (see verses 23 and 32), lays emphatic stress on the "casting out devils," while St. Matthew's account speaks more generally of "all manner of sickness and all manner of diseases."

^(40—43) **And there came a leper.**—St. Matthew (viii. 1) places the miracle that follows in direct sequence on the Sermon on the Mount. (See Note on verse 29.) The discussion of leprosy, as to its nature, symptoms, and causes, would be at once long and difficult. The word, which is Greek and not Hebrew in its origin, has probably been used with varying extent of meaning, sometimes including elephantiasis, or even cancer. Even in its narrower meaning, as used by Hippocrates, leprosy was subdivided into three kinds: (1) the mealy, (2) the white, (3) the

black, according to the appearance presented by the portions of diseased flesh. Confining ourselves to the Biblical form of the disease, we note (1) its probable origin in the squalor and wretchedness of the Egyptian bondage. It was the "botch, or plague of Egypt" (Deut. xxviii. 27). In the Egyptian legends of the Exodus, indeed, the Israelites were said to have been expelled because they were lepers. (Joseph, *c. Apion.* i. 26; Tac. *Hist.* v. 3.) (2) Its main features were the appearance of a bright spot on the flesh, whiter than the rest, spreading, inflaming, cracking; an ichorous humour oozing from the cracks, the skin becoming hard, scaly, "as white as snow" (Ex. iv. 6; 2 Kings v. 27). One so affected was regarded as unclean; his touch brought defilement (Lev. xiii. 3, 11, 15). He was looked upon as smitten with a divine plague, and cases like those of Miriam (Num. xii. 10), Gehazi (2 Kings v. 27), and Uzziah (2 Chron. xxvi. 19, 29), gave strength to the belief. He had to live apart from his fellows, to wear on his brow the outward sign of separation, to cry out the words of warning, "Unclean, unclean" (Lev. xiii. 45). The idea which lay at the bottom of this separation seems to have been one of abhorrence rather than precaution. The disease was loathsome, but there is no evidence that it was contagious, or even believed to be contagious. At the stage in which it reached its height, and

down to him, and saying unto him, If you wilt, thou canst make me clean. ⁽⁴¹⁾ And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth *his* hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean. ⁽⁴²⁾ And as

soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed. ⁽⁴³⁾ And he straightly charged him, and forthwith sent him away; ⁽⁴⁴⁾ and saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any

the whole body was covered with the botch and scabs, the man was, by a strange contrast, declared to be ceremonially clean (Lev. xiii. 13), and in this state, therefore, the leper might return to his kindred, and take his place among the worshippers of the synagogue. In the case now before us, the man would appear to have been as yet in the intermediate stage. St. Luke describes him, however, as "full of leprosy."

Kneeling down to him.—The words, which are, however, omitted in the better MSS., like St. Matthew's "worshipped him," or St. Luke's "falling on his face," in the highest form of Eastern homage. The act gave to the word "Lord" the emphasis of one, at least, of its higher meanings.

If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.—The words imply either that he had seen or heard of our Lord's works of healing, or that His words had impressed him with the belief that the Teacher must have a power extending to acts also. There does not appear to have been any previous case of leprosy miraculously cleansed in our Lord's ministry. The words of the man involve a singular mingling of faith and distrust. He believes in the power, he does not as yet believe

in the will. Can it stoop to one so foul as he? If he shared the common feeling that leprosy was the punishment of sin, he might ask himself, Will He pity and relieve one so sinful?

⁽⁴¹⁾ **Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him.**—The act, which must, we may believe, have been startling to the leper who had been accustomed to see all men shrink from contact with him, was itself a proof at once of the will and the power to heal. He did not fear becoming unclean by that contact, and was therefore not subject to the law that forbade the touch. And He met the one element of doubt in the sufferer's mind by the words—yet more, perhaps, the tone and look—that told of pity—"I will; be thou clean." St. Mark adds, it will be seen, "Had compassion on him."

⁽⁴²⁾ **Immediately the leprosy departed from him.**—We may venture to picture the process to our minds: the skin cleansed, the sores closed, the diseased whiteness giving way, almost as in a moment, to the tints and tones of health.

⁽⁴³⁾ **He straitly charged him.**—The word is the same as that in Matt. ix. 30, and implies an unusual intensity and urgency of tone as well as words.

⁽⁴⁴⁾ **See thou say nothing to**

man : but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them. ⁽⁴⁵⁾ But he went out,^a and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places :

A.D. 31.

b Matt. 9.

1.

a Luke 5.

15.

and they came to him from every quarter.

CHAPTER II.—⁽¹⁾ And again he entered into Capernaum after *some* days ;^b and it was noised that he was in the house. ⁽²⁾ And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive *them*, no,

any man—The reasons of the command are not given, but are not far to seek. (1) The offering of the gift was an act of obedience to the Law (Lev. xiv. 10, 21, 22), and was therefore the right thing for the man to do. In this way also our Lord showed that He had not come, as far as His immediate work was concerned, to destroy even the ceremonial Law, but to fulfil. (2) It was the appointed test of the reality and completeness of the cleansing work. (3) It was better for the man's own spiritual life to cherish his gratitude than to waste it in many words. In the healing of the ten lepers in Luke xvii. 14, we find a like command given.

So much lies on the surface. But as the treatment of leprosy in the Mosaic code was clearly symbolical rather than sanitary, and apparently dealt with the disease as the special type of sin in its most malignant form, so in the healing of the leper we may fairly see the symbol of our Lord's power to purify and save from sin, and in His touching the leper, the close fellowship into which He entered with our

unclean nature, that through His touch it might be made clean. The miracle, like most other miracles, was also a parable in act.

⁽⁴⁵⁾ But he went out.—St. Mark alone describes the man himself as the agent in spreading the report of the miracle, his eager gratitude overpowering his sense of obedience, and gives in more vivid terms than St. Luke the consequent pressure of the multitude, and the necessity for retirement into "desert places," probably the open country or the hill-sides that sloped to the sea of Galilee.

II.

⁽¹⁾ And again he entered into Capernaum.—St. Mark alone names Capernaum, St. Matthew describing it as "His own city," i.e., that which he had made His own after leaving Nazareth, as in Matt. iv. 13. The house may have been Peter's, as before in chap. i. 29.

⁽²⁾ No, not so much as about the door.—Another of St. Mark's graphic touches of description. St. Luke (v. 17) explains the nature and occasion of the crowd. Phari-

not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them. ⁽³⁾ And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four.

⁽⁴⁾ And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed

sees and Doctors of the Law, had come not from Galilee only, but even "from Judæa and Jerusalem;" and their arrival, as if on a commission of enquiry into the action of the new Teacher, would naturally occasion a certain measure of excitement in the provincial city.

He preached the word.—Literally, *He spake the word.*

⁽³⁾ **And they came unto him.**—Combining this narrative with those in the other Gospels we learn—(1) That He was teaching (Luke v. 17) in a house (apparently, from what follows, from the upper room of a house), while the people stood listening in the courtyard. (2) That the courtyard was crowded, so that even the gateway leading into the street was filled. (See chap. ii. 2.) (3) That among the hearers were, as has been said above, Pharisees and Doctors of the Law, from "Judæa and Jerusalem." The last fact is important as one of the few traces in the first three Gospels of an unrecorded ministry in Jerusalem, and, as will be seen, throws light on much that follows. They had apparently come to see how the new Teacher, who had so startled them at Jerusalem, as in John ii., iii., v., was carrying on His work in Galilee, and, as far as they could, to hinder it. (4) "That the power of the Lord was present to heal them" (Luke v. 17), i.e., that as He taught the sick were

brought to Him, and, either by word or touch, were cured.

One sick of the palsy.—St. Matthew and St. Mark use the popular term "paralytic;" St. Luke, with perhaps more technical precision, the participle of the verb, "who was paralysed." The man was borne on a couch carried by four bearers. They sought to bring him through the door, but were hindered by the crowd; and then going outside the house, they got upon the roof, removed part of the roof (the light structure of Eastern houses made the work comparatively easy), let him down with ropes through the opening into the midst of the crowd, just in front of the Teacher (Mark. ii. iv; Luke v. 19). This persistency implied faith in His power to heal on the part both of the sick man and the bearers.

⁽⁴⁾ **They uncovered the roof . . . when they had broken it up.**—Literally, *when and having dug it up.* The strong words describing the injury done to the roof are peculiar to St. Mark. St. Luke gives, "through the tiles," as if indicating that the house was not thatched.

They let down the bed.—St. Mark uses a different word from St. Matthew, the Greek form of the Latin word *grabatus*, the pallet or camp-bed used by the poor. The same word appears in John v. 8, 9, 10, and in Acts v. 15;

wherein the sick of the palsy lay. ⁽⁵⁾ When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven

thee. ⁽⁶⁾ But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, ⁽⁷⁾ Why doth this *man* thus speak blas-

ix. 33, but not at all in St. Matthew or St. Luke.

⁽⁵⁾ **Son.** — Better, *child*. The word implies, perhaps (as in Luke ii. 48), comparative youth, or, it may be, a fatherly tone of love and pity on the part of the speaker. Here, as elsewhere, pity is the starting-point of our Lord's work of healing, and He looked with infinite tenderness on the dejected expression of the sufferer, who had, as is implied in the "Be of good cheer" of Matt. ix. 2, lost heart and hope.

Thy sins be forgiven thee. —The English is to modern ears ambiguous, and suggests the thought of a prayer or wish. The Greek is, however, either the present or the perfect passive of the indicative, "Thy sins are" or "have been forgiven thee." The words were addressed, we must believe, to the secret yearnings of the sufferer. Sickness had made him conscious of the burden of his sins, perhaps had come (as such forms of nervous exhaustion often do come) as the direct consequence of his sin. The Healer saw that the disease of the soul must first be removed, and that then would come the time for restoring strength to the body.

⁽⁶⁾ **Certain of the scribes.** — These are described by St. Luke (v. 17) as "having come from every village of Galilee, and Judæa, and Jerusalem." (See Note on verse 2.)

⁽⁷⁾ **Why doth this man . . ?** —

The better MSS. give, "Why doth this Man thus speak? He blasphemeth." The words were but an echo of the charge that had been brought at Jerusalem, that "He made Himself equal with God" (John v. 18), and may well have come from some of the same objectors. St. Mark and St. Luke give (what we do not find in St. Matthew) the grounds of their accusation: "What is this that this Man thus speaks? Who can forgive sins but One, that is God?" Speaking abstractedly, they were affirming one of the first principles of all true religious belief. All sins are primarily offences against God, and therefore, though men may forgive trespasses as far as they themselves are concerned, the ultimate act of forgiveness belongs to God only; and for a mere man, as such, to claim the right of forgiving thus absolutely was to claim a divine attribute, and therefore to blaspheme—i.e., to utter words as disparaging as open profaneness to the majesty of God. What they forgot to take into account was the possibility of either of two alternatives (1) that God might so far delegate His power to His chosen servants that they, on giving sufficient evidence of that delegation, might rightly declare sins to be forgiven; or (2) that the Teacher might Himself (as He had asserted in John v. 17, 22), be one with God, and so share in His perfections and

phemies? who can forgive sins but God only?^a (8) And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts?

(9) Whether is it easier to

a. Joh. 14.
4; 1st.
43. 25.

say to the sick of the palsy, *Thy sins be forgiven thee*; or to say, *Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk*? (10) But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) (11) I say unto

prerogatives. On either of these suppositions the charge of blasphemy was fully answered, and the sin of the scribes lay in their ignoring the fact that He had given sufficient proof of the former, if not of the latter also.

(8) When Jesus perceived in his spirit.—We note the recurrence of the word “immediately” as characteristic of St. Mark.

Why reason ye these things?—The words appear more definitely in St. Matthew, “Why think ye evil?” The thoughts were evil because, in face of the mighty works and the divine wisdom of the Teacher, they were assuming that He had wantonly spoken words that involved the most extreme of all forms of sin against the God in whose name He taught.

(9) Whether it is easier . . . ?—The form of the question implies what we call an argument *a fortiori*. It was easier to say, “Thy sins are forgiven thee,” for those words could not be put to any outward test, and only the consciousness of the sinner could attest their power. It was a bolder and a harder thing to risk the utterance of words which challenged an immediate and visible fulfilment; and yet He was content to utter such words, without fear of the result. Mea-

sured in their true relation to each other, the spiritual wonder was, of course, the greater; but here, as so often elsewhere, He puts Himself, as it were, on the level of those who hear Him, and vouchsafes to speak to them according to their thoughts.

(10) That ye may know that the Son of man hath power.—Better, *authority*, as in Matt. vii. 29; chap. i. 27; John v. 27. The last passage is so closely parallel that we can hardly be wrong in thinking that the words now spoken were meant to recall those which some, at least, of those who listened had heard before. This view, at any rate, brings out the fulness of their meaning. As they stand here, they seem to include both the two hypotheses mentioned in the Note on verse 3. The Father had given the Lord Jesus authority to “forgive sins” and to “execute judgment” because He was the Son of Man, the representative of mankind, and as such was exercising a delegated power. But then, that discourse in John v. showed that He also spoke of Himself as the Son of God as well as the Son of Man (John v. 25), and as such claimed an honour equal to that which was rightly paid to the

thee. Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house. ⁽¹²⁾ And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all ; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion. ⁽¹³⁾ And he went

^a Matt. 2
9.

¹ Or, at the place where the custom was received.

forth again by the sea side ; and all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them.

⁽¹⁴⁾ And as he passed by,^a he saw Levi the son of Alphæus sitting at the receipt of custom,¹ and said unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him.

Father (John v. 23). Ultimately, therefore, our Lord's answer rests on the higher, and not the lower, of the two grounds on which the objectors might have been met.

Arise, and take up thy bed.

—As St. Mark gives the words we have the very syllables that had been spoken to the “impotent man” at Bethesda (John v. 8), and in any case words identical in meaning ; and the natural inference is that our Lord meant to recall what the scribes from Jerusalem had then seen and heard.

⁽¹²⁾ **And immediately he arose.**—The adverb is characteristic. St. Luke adds that he went to his house, “glorifying God.” We can picture to ourselves the exultant joy of the soul freed from the burden of its sin, and rejoicing in the new vitality of the body ; that joy spreading, as by the contagion of sympathy, to the bystanders, so that they too “glorified God” as he did, in utterances of praise.

We never saw it on this fashion.—St. Matthew gives the substance but not the words. St. Luke, “we have seen strange things to-day.”

⁽¹⁴⁾ **Levi the son of Alphæus.**—St. Mark and St. Luke give the

name as Levi, the former adding that he was the “son of Alphæus,” while the Gospel which purports to be written by him gives Matthew (Matt. ix. 1). The difference may be explained by assuming that in his case, as in that of “Simon who is called (or named) Peter” (Matt. x. 2), a new name was given that practically superseded the old. The meaning of Matthew—which, like Theodore, Dorotheus, and the like, means “the gift of God,” or, more strictly, “the gift of Jehovah”—makes a change of this kind in itself probable. If he were the son of Alphæus, he would be (assuming identity of person and of name) the brother of the James whose name appears with his own in the second group of four in the lists of the Twelve Apostles.

Sitting at the receipt of custom.—Literally, *at the custom-house*, the *douane* of the lake. The customs levied there were probably of the nature of an *octroi* on the fish, fruit, and other produce that made up the exports and imports of Capernaum.

And said unto him, Follow me.—St. Mark (ii. 13) makes the call follow close upon an unrecorded discourse addressed to the “whole

(15) And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed

him. (16) And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?

multitude" of Capernaum. In the nature of the case it was probable that there had been, as in the analogous call of the sons of Jona and Zebedee, a preparation of some kind. A brother, it may be, had been converted, his own heart had been touched, he had felt (as we may infer from Matt. iv. 13) the presence of the new Teacher as light in the shadow of death.

He arose and followed him.—St. Luke adds, "he left all." There was not, according to man's estimate, much to leave—his desk at the custom house, his stipend or his percentage; but it was his all, and no man can leave more than that.

(15) **As Jesus sat at meat in his house.**—The Greek runs, *as He sat at meat*. The insertion of the name Jesus in this part of the sentence injures the sense. What seems to have been meant is, that while Levi (or Matthew) sat (*i.e.*, reclined after Roman fashion), many publicans and sinners came and reclined with Jesus and His disciples. On the assumption of St. Matthew's authorship of the Gospel that bears his name, there is a noticeable humility in his omission of the fact that he had made "a great feast" (Luke v. 29). It was apparently a farewell feast to old friends and neighbours before he entered on his new calling. They were naturally mostly of his

own class, or on a yet lower level. The publican was the pariah of Palestine, and no decent person would associate with him. Over and above the stigma which attached to his class everywhere, as expressed in the Greek proverb, "Six publicans and half-a-dozen extortioners," he was for the Jews the visible representative of a bondage which they hated, and was looked on as at once an apostate and almost as a traitor to his country. The term "sinners" may have included Gentiles (as in Gal. ii. 15), but does not necessarily designate them. So far as the context goes, as in verse 17, the term is used in its simple and natural sense. The crowd was, probably, increased by the presence of others besides the invited guests who had followed Jesus.

(16) **When the scribes and Pharisees saw it.**—Some MSS. give "Scribes of the Pharisees." These were probably those who had been present at the healing of the paralytic, the scribes who had come from Jerusalem. They, of course, would not enter the publican's house, but they stood outside and watched the mingled guests with wonder, and asked the disciples who stood within hearing their two-fold question, "Why do *ye* eat and drink . . . (Luke v. 30)?" and, as here, "Why doth

(17) When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

^a Matt. 9.
14;
Luke 5.
33.

(18) And the disciples of John

and of the Pharisees used to fast:^a and they come and say unto him, Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not?

(19) And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of

He, *your Master* (as in Matt. ix. 11) . . . ?”

(17) **They that are whole.**—Literally, *They that are strong*. St. Luke gives, with a more professional precision, “They that are in health.” That speaking from the thoughts and standpoint of those addressed rather than His own (which we might term a grave and almost plaintive irony), which enters so largely into our Lord’s teaching, appears here in its most transparent form. Those of whom He speaks were, we know, suffering from the worst form of spiritual disease, but in their own estimation they were without spot or taint, and as such, therefore, He speaks to them. On their own showing, they ought not to object to His carrying on that work where there was most need of it. The proverb cited by Him in Luke iv. 23 shows that it was not the first time that He had referred to His own work as that of the Great Physician, as of the bodies, so also of the souls, of men.

I came not to call the righteous.—Closely as the three accounts agree, it is noticeable that here also St. Mark and St. Luke, as writing for Gentile readers, omit the reference which we find in Matt. ix. 13, to the words cited by our Lord from the Old Testament. (Hos. vi. 6.) The words “to re-

pentance” are omitted in many of the better MSS., and may have been inserted to bring the narrative into harmony with Luke v. 30.

(18) **The disciples of John . . . used to fast.**—Better, *were fasting*. The passage is interesting as showing (1) that the followers of the Baptist continued during our Lord’s ministry to form a separate body (as in Matt. xi. 2; xiv. 12); and (2) that they obeyed rules which he had given them, more or less after the pattern of those of the Pharisees. They had their own days of fasting, or observed the second and fifth days of the week, as the Pharisees did (the context makes it probable that the feast in St. Matthew’s house was held on one of them), their own forms of prayer (Luke xi. 1). They, it would seem, acting with the Pharisees, and perhaps influenced by them, were perplexed at conduct so unlike that of the master they revered, and came therefore with their question. But they were, at least, not hypocrites, and they are answered therefore without the sternness which had marked the reply to their companions.

(19) **Can the children of the bridechamber fast?**—The words were full of meaning in themselves, but they only gain their full significance when we

the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have

the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. ⁽²⁰⁾ But the days will come, when

connect them with the teaching of the Baptist recorded in John iii. 29. He had pointed to Jesus as "the Bridegroom." He had taught his disciples that the coming of that Bridegroom was the fulfilling of his joy. Would he have withdrawn from the outward expression of that joy? Had his disciples forgotten that teaching?

The children of the bride-chamber.—The phrase was a natural Hebrew equivalent for the guests invited to the wedding. The words implied, startling as that thought would be to those who heard them, that the feast in Matthew's house was, in fact, a wedding-feast. The disciples of Jesus were at once the guests of that feast individually; and collectively they were representatives of the new Israel, the new congregation or *Ecclesia*, which was, as our Lord taught in parable (Matt. xxii. 2), and St. Paul directly (Eph. v. 25—27), and St. John in apocalyptic vision (Rev. xix. 7; xxi. 2), the bride whom He had come to make His own, to cleanse, and to purify. Whatever incongruity there was in men bringing the austerities and the abstinence of a solemn fast into the chamber of a wedding-feast would have presented itself had the disciples fasted then and there.

⁽²⁰⁾ **The days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them.**—Noteworthy as the first recorded intimation in our Lord's public teaching of His coming death. Those

in John ii. 19; iii. 14, were less clear until interpreted by the event, and were addressed in the first instance to those who did not understand them at all, and in the second to Nicodemus, and perhaps to him only, or, at the furthest, to St. John. The joy of the wedding-feast would cease, and then would come the long night of expectation, till once again there should be the cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh" (Matt. xxv. 6).

Then shall they fast.—The better MSS. give *in that day*. The words can hardly be looked on as a command imposing fasting as a formal obligation, but, beyond all doubt, they sanction the principle on which fasting rests. The time that was to follow the departure of the Bridegroom would be one of sorrow, conflict, discipline, earnest prayer, and at such a time the self-conquest implied in abstinence was the natural and true expression of the feelings that belonged to it. So the Christian Church has felt from the beginning (Acts xiii. 2, 3); so it was, as the New Testament records, in the lives of at least two great apostles, St. Peter (Acts x. 10) and St. Paul (2 Cor. xi. 27). So far as it goes, however, the principle here asserted is in favour of fasts at special seasons of sorrow, rather than of frequent and fixed fasts as a discipline, or meritorious act. In fixing her days of fasting, the Church of England, partly guided perhaps by earlier usage, has at least connected them with the seasons and days that call specially

the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those

Or, raw,
or, unwrought.

days. ⁽²¹⁾ No man also seweth a piece of new¹ cloth on an old garment: else

to meditation on the sterner, sadder side of truth. The Pharisees, it may be noted, observed the second and fifth days of the week as fasts, the Talmud assigning as the reason that Moses had ascended Sinai on the latter day, and descended on the former. It was partly, perhaps, a natural consequence of the change from the Sabbath to the Lord's day, that the Christian Church fixed on the fourth and sixth days.

⁽²¹⁾ **No man also seweth a piece of new cloth.**—There is a closer connection between the three similitudes than at first sight appears. The wedding-feast suggested the idea of the wedding-garment, and of the wine which belonged to its joy. The leathern bottles which had contained the "new wine" were probably within view as our Lord spoke. We may even go a step further, and believe that the very dress of those who sat at meat in Matthew's house, coming as they did from the lower and less decently habited classes, made the other illustration also all the more palpable and vivid. How could those worn garments be made meet for wedding-guests? Would it be enough to sew on a patch of new cloth where the old was wearing into holes? "Not so," He answers here: "not so," He answers again, when He implicitly makes the king who gives the feast the giver also of the garment (Matt. xxii. 2).

New cloth—i.e., cloth that has not passed through the fuller's hands—new and undressed, in its

freshest and strongest state. Such a patch sewn upon a weak part of the old cloak would, on the first strain, tear the cloth near it. It weakened instead of strengthening it; it was no change for the better.

Else the new piece . . .—Literally, following the best MSS., *The filling-up taketh away from it, the new from the old.*

The rent is made worse.—Better, *there comes a worse rent.* St. Luke adds another reason, "the piece put in agrees not with the old."

The meaning of the parable in its direct application lies very near the surface. The "garment" is that which is outward, the life and conversation of the man, which show his character. The "old garment" is the common life of sinful men, such as Matthew and his guests; the "new garment" is the life of holiness, the religious life in its completeness; fasting, as one element of that life, is the "patch" of new cloth which agrees not with the old, and leads to a greater evil, a "worse rent" in the life than before. No one would so deal with the literal garment. Yet this was what the Pharisees and the disciples of John were wishing to do with the half-converted publicans. This, we may add, is what the Church of Christ has too often done in her work as the converter of the nations. Sacramental ordinances, or monastic vows, or Puritan formulæ, or Quaker conventionalities, have been engrafted on lives that were radically barbarous, or heathen, or

the new piece that filled it up taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse. ⁽²²⁾ And no man putteth new wine into old bottles : else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and

the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred : but new wine must be put into new bottles.

⁽²³⁾ And it came to pass, that he went through the corn fields on the sabbath

worldly, and the contrast has been glaring, and the "rent" made worse. The more excellent way, which our Lord pursued, and which it is our wisdom to pursue, is to take the old garment, and to transform it, as by a renewing power from within, thread by thread, till old things are passed away, and all things are become new. This represents what is actually the usual process in such a moral and spiritual change. Ideally it is true that the king gives the wedding garment in its completeness (Matt. xxii. 11).

⁽²²⁾ And no man putteth new wine into old bottles.—The bottles are those still used in Italy, Spain, and the East, made of hides partly tanned, and retaining, to a great extent, the form of the living animals. These, as they grew dry with age, became very liable to crack, and were unable to resist the pressure of the fermenting liquor. If the mistake were made, the bottles were marred, and the wine spilt. When we interpret the parable, we see at once that the "new wine" represents the inner, as the garment did the outer, aspect of Christian life, the new energies and gifts of the Spirit, which, as on the day of Pentecost, were likened to new wine (Acts ii. 13), which St. Paul afterwards contrasts with them (Eph. v. 18). In dealing with men, our Lord did

not bestow these gifts suddenly, even on His own disciples, any more than He imposed rules of life for which men were not ready. As the action of organised churches has too often reproduced the mistake of sewing the patch of new cloth on the old garment, so in the action of enthusiastic or mystic sects, in the history of Montanism, Quakerism in its earlier stages, the growth of the so-called Catholic and Apostolic Church, which had its origin in the history of Edward Irving, we have that of pouring new wine into old bottles. The teaching of our Lord points in both instances to the wisdom of gradual training, speaking the truth as men are able to bear it; reserving many truths because they "cannot bear them now" (John xvi. 12).

St. Luke adds, as before, a new aspect of the illustration: "No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better." See Luke v. 39.

⁽²³⁾ And it came to pass.—St. Luke (vi. 1) defines the time more specifically as "the second first sabbath." A discussion of that unusual phrase would be out of place here. It will be enough to state that the facts of the case place it clearly between the Passover and the Feast of Pentecost,

day;^a and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn.
 (24) And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful?
 (25) And he said unto them

^a Matt.
12. 1.

Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungred, he, and they that were with him? (26) How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the

between the beginning of the barley and the end of the wheat harvest, when the ears of corn would be ripe enough to eat, though as yet the harvest had not come.

Began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn.—More literally, *they began to make a path* (or perhaps, *to make their way*), *plucking the ears of corn*. As in verse 4 (where see Note), St. Mark's description is again more vivid than that in the other Gospels. The act was permitted by the Law as far as the rights of property were concerned (Deut. xxiii. 25), but it was against the Pharisees' interpretation of the law of the Sabbath. To pluck the ears was to reap, to rub the husks from the grain was to thresh; and the new Teacher was therefore, they thought, tacitly sanctioning a distinct breach of the holiness of the day of rest.

(24) **The Pharisees said unto him.**—In the position in which the narrative stands in this Gospel and in St. Luke the Pharisees would appear as belonging to the company that had come down from Jerusalem to watch and accuse the new Teacher (Luke v. 17). He claimed the power to forgive sins, He ate and drank with publicans and sinners. Now they found that He was teaching men to dishonour the Sabbath, as, from their standpoint,

He had already taught them in Jerusalem (John v. 10, 16).

(25) **Have ye never read . . . ?**—The question was an appeal to the Pharisees on the ground where they thought themselves strongest. For them it was an argument *à fortiori*. Would they accuse David of sacrilege and Sabbath-breaking because he, in a case of urgent need, set at nought the two-fold law of ordinances? If they shrank from that, was it not inconsistent to condemn the disciples of Jesus, a greater than David, for a far lighter transgression?

(26) **How he went into the house of God.**—Strictly speaking, it was in the tabernacle at Nob, where Ahimelech (possibly assisted by Abiathar) was ministering as high priest (1 Sam. xxi. 6). The shew-bread, or "bread of oblation," consisted of twelve loaves, in two rows of six each, which were offered every Sabbath day (Ex. xxv. 30; xl. 23; Lev. xxiv. 5—9), the loaves of the previous week being then removed, and reserved for the exclusive use of the priests. The necessity of the case, however, was in this instance allowed to override the ceremonial ordinance, and our Lord teaches men through that single instance to see the general principle that when positive commands and

shew bread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him?

(27) And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the

A.D. 31.

a Matt. 12. 9.

sabbath : (28) therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

CHAPTER III.—

(1) And he entered again into the synagogue ;^a and

necessities involving the life or well-being of man come into collision, the latter, not the former, must prevail. The fact that it was on the Sabbath day that David had asked for the shew-bread is not stated in the history, but it is a necessary inference from the ceremonial laws just referred to.

In the days of Abiathar the high priest. — St. Mark's is the only record that gives the name of the high priest, and in so doing, while he gives proof of the independence of his narrative, creates an historical difficulty. In 1 Sam. xxi. 1, Ahimelech is named as exercising the high priest's office in the Tabernacle at Nob. He is slain by Doeg, at the command of Saul, and his son Abiathar joins David at the cave of Adullam (1 Sam. xxii. 20), and continues to act as high priest till his deposition by Solomon (1 Kings ii. 26). Two conjectural explanations suggest themselves as probable: (1) that St. Mark, or that our Lord, may have given the name of the more famous priest of the two, who, though not then high-priest, was at the Tabernacle at the time referred to; (2) that he might have acted then as a coadjutor to his father, as Eli's sons seem to have done to him (1 Sam. iv. 4), and being, as his flight showed, of David's party, was the chief

agent in allowing him to take the shew-bread. St. Matthew's report, it may be noted (chap. xii. 5), draws another argument from the Sabbath labours of the priests as they ministered in the Temple.

(28) Therefore the Son of man. — The words contain the ground for the authoritative judgment of the previous verse. They assert that this also came within the limits of His jurisdiction as the Messiah (comp. Dan. vii. 13) just as the power to forgive sins had been claimed by Him under the same title. In both instances, however, the choice of the title is significant. What is done is done by Him as the representative of humanity, acting, as it were, in its name, and claiming for it as such what He thus seems at first to claim for Himself as a special and absolute prerogative.

III.

(1-4) A man there which had a withered hand.—This and the two previous incidents follow in the same sequence in all the three Gospels, but in St. Matthew, after the mission of the Twelve, in St. Mark and St. Luke before. Two facts are implied: (1) That the Pharisees expected our Lord to heal the man thus afflicted. They knew that commonly the mere sight of suffering of this kind called out

there was a man there which had a withered hand.

(2) And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him.

(3) And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth. (4) And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath day, or to do evil?

¹ Or, blind-ness.

to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace.

(5) And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness¹ of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other. (6) And the Pharisees went forth,

His sympathy, and that the sympathy passed into act. (2) That they had resolved, if He did so heal, to make it the ground of a definite accusation before the local tribunal, the "judgment" of Matt. v. 21. The casuistry of the Rabbis allowed the healing art to be practised on the Sabbath in cases of life and death, but the "withered hand," a permanent infirmity, obviously did not come under that category.

(2) **They watched him . . .**—We have obviously the same body of persons who were prominent in the two previous incidents—i.e., the scribes and Pharisees who had come to Capernaum from Jerusalem and Judæa. (See Note on chap. ii. 2.)

(4) **Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath day . . . ?**—The whole scene is painted vividly. The man stands in the midst; our Lord points to him; the scribes sit and gaze, and hear the pointed question which asserts, in its very terms, that not to do good, when there was the power to do it, is really to do evil.

(6) **And when he had looked round.**—St. Mark, with

his usual vividness, adds the look and gesture and feeling which accompanied the words.

Being grieved.—The form of the Greek participle implies compassion as well as sorrow, and both feelings were blended with this righteous anger.

It was restored whole—i.e., as the tense implies, in the act of stretching the hand forth. The man's ready obedience to the command, which, if he had not believed in the power of Jesus, would have seemed an idle mockery, was, *ipso facto*, a proof that he had "faith to be healed."

(6) **Straightway took counsel with the Herodians.**—If, as seems probable, these Pharisees included those who had come from Jerusalem, the deliberation was of more importance in its bearing on our Lord's future work than if it had been a mere meeting of the local members of the party. It is significant that St. Mark adds that they called the Herodians into their counsels. These latter have not yet been mentioned in the Gospel history, but they had probably been irritated by the marked reference

and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him. ⁽⁷⁾ But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea: and

a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judæa, ⁽⁸⁾ and from Jerusalem, and from Idumæa, and from beyond Jordan; and they about

to their luxurious self-indulgence in our Lord's words as to those that "wear soft clothing," which in St. Matthew's narrative (xi. 8) almost immediately precede this work of healing.

The party thus described are known to us only through the Gospels of St. Matthew (xxii. 16) and St. Mark; and their precise relation to the other sects or schools among the Jews is consequently matter of conjecture. The form of the name (like *Mariani*, *Pompeiani*, and, we may add, *Christiani*) is Latin, and may be noted as an example of the influence of that language in the public life of Palestine. The Herodians were known, first to the Romans and then to their own people, as adherents of the house of the Herods. In what sense they were adherents, and why they now joined with the Pharisees, is less clear, and it would seem, as if now, as afterwards in Matt. xxii. 16, two opposing parties had coalesced against a common adversary. A fact recorded by Jewish writers probably gives us the origin of the party. In the early days of Herod the Great, when Hillel, the great scribe, was at the height of his fame, he had as his colleague, Menahem, possibly the son of the Essene of that name of whom Josephus tells us that he prophesied Herod's future greatness (*Ant.* xv. 10, § 5). and, it may be, the father of the Manaen (another form of the

same name) of Acts xiii. 1. The latter was tempted by the king's growing power, and, with eighty followers, entered into his service, forsook the ranks of the Pharisees, and appeared in gorgeous apparel glittering with gold (Jost, *Gesch. Judenthums*, i. 259. Here we find them at Capernaum conspiring with the Pharisees who had come from Jerusalem. The coalition of which we read in Matt. xxii. 16 may be regarded, therefore, as a renewal of their previous alliance. A comparison of chap. viii. 15 and Matt. xvi. 6 suggests a general affinity with the policy and tenets of the Sadducees.

⁽⁷⁾ Jesus withdrew himself . . . to the sea.—The sea, it need hardly be said, is that of Galilee.

^(7, 8) And from Judæa, and from Jerusalem . . . —The fact thus recorded is interesting as in some degree implying, like those referred to in the Notes on chap. ii. 2, the ministry in Jerusalem and its neighbourhood, which the first three Gospels, for some reason or other, pass over, but of which we find a record in John ii., iii., v.

⁽⁸⁾ From Idumæa.—The only passage in the New Testament in which this country is named. It had acquired a considerably wider range than the Edom of the Old Testament, and included the whole country between the *Arabah*, the

Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him. ⁽⁹⁾ And he spake to his disciples, that a small ship should wait on him because of the multitude, lest they should throng him. ⁽¹⁰⁾ For he had healed many; insomuch that they pressed¹ upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues. ⁽¹¹⁾ And unclean spirits,

^a Matt.
10. 1.

¹ Or,
rushed.

when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God. ⁽¹²⁾ And he straitly charged them that they should not make him known. ⁽¹³⁾ And he goeth up into a mountain,^a and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him. ⁽¹⁴⁾ And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach,

prolongation of the valley of the Jordan south of the Dead Sea, and the Mediterranean. It was at this time under the government of Aretas (2 Cor. xi. 32), the father of the wife whom Herod Antipas had divorced, and this had probably brought about a more frequent intercourse between its inhabitants and those of Galilee and Peræa.

They about Tyre and Sidon.

—The fact is interesting in its connection with the history of the Syro-Phœnician woman (chap. vii. 24; Matt. xv. 21) as showing how it was that our Lord's appearance in that region was welcomed as that of one whose fame had travelled thither before Him.

⁽⁹⁾ **That a small ship should wait on him.**—The fact thus mentioned incidentally shows that in what is recorded in Matt. xiii. 2 our Lord was but having recourse to a practice already familiar, and explains the use of the definite article "*the* boat" in that and other passages (chap. iv. 1; Matt. viii. 23; xiv. 13, 22).

⁽¹⁰⁾ **As many as had plagues.**

—Literally, *scourges*; the same word as in Acts xxii. 24; Heb. xi. 36.

⁽¹¹⁾ **And unclean spirits.**—The testimony which had been given in a single instance (chap. i. 24) now again became (as in chap. i. 34) more or less general. But it came in a form which our Lord could not receive. The wild cry of the frenzied demoniac had no place in the evidence to which He appealed (John v. 31—37), and tended, so far as it impressed men at all, to set them against the Teacher who was thus acknowledged. It was this, perhaps, that gave occasion to the scoffing calumny that "he cast out devils through Beelzebub" (verse 22).

⁽¹³⁾ **And he goeth up into a mountain.**—The sequence of events in St. Mark varies much, it will be seen, from St. Matthew, and comes nearer to that in St. Luke. What follows is, like the parallel narrative of Luke vi. 12, 13, the selection rather than the mission of the Twelve, the latter appearing in Matt. x. In St. Luke

<p>(¹⁵) and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast</p>	<p>out devils: (¹⁶) and Simon he surnamed Peter;</p>
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we find the noticeable fact that the night had been spent in prayer, apparently as usual, alone, and that when it was day He called the company of the disciples, who had waited below, and made choice of the Twelve. The words "callesth unto him whom He would," seem to imply a summons by name now to one, and now to another, the multitude of the disciples waiting below in eager expectation to see who would thus be chosen.

That selection had been made; the number at once suggested the thought that they represented the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. xix. 28), and were as such to be His messengers to the whole people of the dispersion, who gloried in the thought of being still the "twelve-tribed" people (Acts xxvi. 7; Jas. i. 1; Rev. vii. 4—8). The name Apostle (which St. Mark does not give in this context, though he uses it in chap. vi. 30) signified literally "one who is sent;" but it had acquired in classical Greek a more specific meaning, as the "ambassador," or "envoy," of a state. According to our Lord's teaching they were sent by Him, even as He had been sent by the Father (John xx. 21).

(¹⁶⁻¹⁹) **And Simon he surnamed Peter.**—The name, or its equivalent, Cephias, had been given, it will be remembered, to the disciple on his first confession of his faith (John i. 42). A comparison of the four lists of the Apostles (Matt. x. 2—4, Mark iii. 16—19, Luke vi. 13—16, Acts i. 13) brings out some interesting facts. (1.) The name of Peter is always first, that of Judas always last. In the former

case we recognise acknowledged pre-eminence from the beginning. The position of the latter may have been the consequence of the infamy which attached to the name of the traitor; but it is possible (and this may have been one of the elements that entered into the motives of his guilt) that his place had always been one of inferiority.

(2.) All the lists divide themselves into three groups of four, the persons in each group being always the same (assuming that the three names, Judas the *brother* (?) of James, Thaddæus, and Lebbaeus, belong to the same person), though the order in each group varies.

(3.) The first group includes the two sons of Jona and the two sons of Zebedee, whose twofold call is related in John i. 40; Matt. iv. 18—21. In two lists (Mark and Acts) the name of Andrew stands last; in two (Matt. and Luke) that of John. In none of them are the names of Peter and John coupled together, as might have been expected from their close companionship (John xx. 2; Acts iii. 1). The four obviously occupied the innermost place in the company of the Twelve, and were chosen out of the chosen. The three, Peter, James, and John, were the only witnesses of the healing of Jairus's daughter (chap. v. 37), of the Transfiguration (Matt. xvii. 1), and of the Agony in Gethsemane (Matt. xxvi. 37). Something seems to have excluded Andrew, though he had been the first called of all (John i. 40), from this intimate companionship; but we find him joined with the

other three as called to listen to the great prophetic discourse on the Mount of Olives (chap. xiii. 3). All the four appear to have come from Bethsaida, on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee (John i. 44), though Peter and Andrew were, at this time, living at Capernaum (Matt. iv. 18).

(4.) The name of Philip is always first in the second group, and he, too, came from Bethsaida (John i. 44). Next, in the three Gospel lists, comes that of Bartholomew. The name, like Barjona and Bartimæus, was obviously a patronymic, and it was at least probable that he had some other name. The absence of any mention of Bartholomew in St. John's Gospel, or of Nathanael (John i. 45) in the other three, has led most modern commentators to the conclusion that they were two names for the same person; and the juxtaposition of the two names in all the lists agrees with the fact that it was Philip who brought him to know Jesus as the Christ (John i. 45). On this assumption, Bartholomew was of Cana, the scene of our Lord's first miracle (John xxi. 2). The name of Matthew stands before that of Thomas in Mark and Luke, after it in the Gospel which bears his own name. On the change of name from Levi, and his description as the Son of Alphæus, see Notes on chap. ii. 14. As the name of Thomas, or Didymus, means "twin," there seems some ground for believing, from the way in which the two names are grouped together, that here too we have another pair of brothers called to the service of their Master. Eusebius (*H. E.* i. 13), in his account of the conversion of Abgarus of Edessa, speaks of this Apostle as "Judas who is also Thomas,"

and this suggests the reason why the cognomen of "the Twin" prevailed over the name which was already borne by two out of the company of the Twelve.

(5.) The third group always begins with "James the son of Alphæus;" and this description suggests some interesting inferences:—(1.) That he too was a brother of Matthew (there are no grounds for assuming two persons of the name of Alphæus), and probably, therefore, of Thomas also. (2.) That if the Clopas (not Cleopas) of John xix. 25 was, as is generally believed, only the less Græcised form of the name Alphæus, then his mother Mary may have been the sister of Mary the mother of the Lord (see John xix. 25). (3.) This Mary, in her turn, is identified, on comparing chap. xv. 40 with John xix. 25, with the mother of James the Less (literally, *the Little*) and of Joses. The term probably pointed, not to subordinate position, but, as in the case of Zacchæus, to short stature, and appears to have been an epithet (Luke xix. 3) distinguishing him from the James of the first group. The Greek form in both cases was Jacôbus—the Jacob of the Old Testament—which has passed, like Joannes, through many changes (Giacomo, Iago, Jacques, Hamish), till it appears in English in its present clipped and curtailed shape. (4.) On the assumption that the James and Joses of chap. xv. 40 are two of the "brethren of the Lord" of Matt. xiii. 55, this James *might*, perhaps, be identified, as by some writers he has been, with the James "the brother of the Lord" of Acts xv. 13 and Gal. i. 19, the writer of the Epistle. The balance

of evidence is, however, decidedly against this view. (See Note on verse 31.) The next name appears in three different forms: Judas the *brother* of James (it must be noted, however, that the collocation of the two names is that which is elsewhere rendered "the son of . . .," and that the insertion of the word "brother" is an inference from Jude, verse 1) in Luke and Acts; Lebbæus in Matthew (with the addition, in later MSS. and the *textus receptus*, of "who is also surnamed Thaddæus"); Thaddæus in Mark; St. John names him simply as "Judas, not Iscariot" (xiv. 22). The explanation of the variations is natural enough. One who bore the name of Judas, among the most common of all Jewish names, wanted something to distinguish him. This might be found either in the term which expressed his relation as son, or brother, to James the son of Alphæus, or in a personal epithet. Lebbæus suggests a derivation from the Hebrew *leb* (heart), and points to warmth and earnestness of character; *thad*, in later Hebrew, meant the female breast, and may have been the origin of Thaddæus, as indicating even more than the other sobriquet, a feminine devotedness. "Good-heart," "gentle-breast" may be taken, on this assumption, as fair equivalents for the two characteristic epithets. Taking the three names together, they suggest the thought that he was one of the youngest of the Twelve, and was looked upon by the others with an affection which showed itself in the name thus given to him. By others, however, the name Lebbæus has been explained as local, and Lebbæus is said to have been a Galilean

town not far from Carmel. Simon, too, needed a distinguishing epithet, and it was found in the two forms of Zelotes and Cananite or Cananæus (not Canaanite). The former may point to zeal as his chief characteristic, but it was more probably used in the sense in which the followers of Judas of Galilee bore the name, and under which they were prominent in the later struggle with the Romans, as in a special sense "zealots for the law" (Jos. Wars, iv. 3, § 9). (Comp. a like use of the word in Acts xxi. 20.) On this assumption we get a glimpse, full of interest, into the earlier life of the Apostle so named, as having been identified with the wild, passionate patriotism of the Galilean leader before he turned to Christ as the true King of Israel. The other term, Cananite—which is not a local term, but connected with a Hebrew verb, *kana*, to be hot, to glow, to be zealous—expresses the same idea, and was, probably, but the Aramaic equivalent for the Greek form, Zelotes, answering to it as Cephas did to Petros. Lastly, we have "Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him," described by St. John as the "son of Simon" (vi. 71; xii. 4; xiii. 2, 26), the term "Iscariot" being applied in the first and last of these passages to the father also. These facts seem to leave little doubt that the name is local, and is the Græcised form of *Ish-Kerioth* (a man of Kerioth), a town in Judah mentioned in the list of Josh. xv. 25. Assuming this inference, we have in him the only one among the Twelve of whom it is probable that he was of Judæa, and not of Galilee. This also may not have been without its influence on his character,

(¹⁷) and James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder:

¹ Or, home.

(¹⁸) and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphæus, and Thaddæus, and Simon the Canaanite, (¹⁹) and Judas

² Or, kinsmen.

Iscaiot, which also betrayed him: and they went into an house.¹ (²⁰) And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. (²¹) And when his friends² heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself.

separating him, as it might well tend to do, from the devoted loyalty of the others.

(¹⁷) **Boanerges.**—The word is an Aramaic compound (*B'nè-regesh* = sons of thunder). We may see in the name thus given a witness to the fiery zeal of the sons of Zebedee, seen, *e.g.*, in their wish to call down fire from heaven on the Samaritans (Luke ix. 54), and John's desire to stop the work of one who cast out devils (Luke ix. 49), and the prayer of the two brothers that they might sit on their Lord's right hand and on His left in His kingdom (Matt. xx. 21). It was, we may well believe, that burning zeal that made James the proto-martyr of the Apostolic company (Acts xii. 2). We can scarcely fail to trace in the multiplied "thunderings and voices" of the Apocalypse (Rev. iv. 5; vi. 1; viii. 5), and in the tradition of John's indignant shrinking from contact with the heretic Cerinthus, that which was in harmony with the spiritual being of the Seer, and with the name which his Lord had thus given him. It is important, in our thoughts of the beloved disciple, to remember that this, and not

the feminine softness with which painters have loved to clothe him, was his dominant characteristic.

(¹⁸) **Simon the Canaanite.**—Better, *Canaanite*, or, following many MSS., *Canaanean*, *i.e.*, the Aramaic equivalent of Zelotes.

(¹⁹) **And they went into an house.**—It would be better to put a full stop after "betrayed Him," and to make this the beginning of a new sentence. St. Mark's omission of the discourse which, in Luke vi. 20—49, follows on the choice of the Twelve may be noted as characteristic of the former as dwelling throughout on our Lord's acts rather than on his teaching.

(²⁰) **So that they could not so much as eat bread.**—The graphic touch, as if springing from actual reminiscence of that crowded scene, is eminently characteristic of St. Mark.

(²¹) **And when his friends . . .**—Literally, *those from Him*—*i.e.*, from His home. As the "mother and the brethren" are mentioned later on in the chapter as coming to check His teaching, we must see in these some whom they had sent with the same object. To them the new course of action

(22) And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils

^a Matt. 5.
34.

casteth he out devils.^a
(23) And he called them unto him, and said unto them in parables, How

on which our Lord had entered, this mission of the Twelve, this ceaseless preaching with no leisure for rest or refreshment, seemed a sign of over-excitement, a reckless rushing into danger. We may, perhaps, see in the random word thus uttered, that which gave occasion to the more malignant taunt of the scribes in the next verse. They were saying now, almost as the Scribes said afterwards (John x. 20), "He hath a devil, and is mad." In the words translated "he is beside himself" we have that which was also applied in mockery to St. Paul (2 Cor. v. 13). The notes of time are obviously vague here, and following in the track of the other Gospels we may assume a considerable interval between verses 19 and 20, between verses 21 and 22, and again between verses 30 and 31.

(22) And the Scribes which came down from Jerusalem—We note once more the presence of these representatives of an organised opposition, as before in chaps ii. 6, 24; iii. 2, 6.

He hath Beelzebub. — The Greek gives the form *Beelzebub*. Its history illustrates some interesting phases of Jewish thought. (1.) It appears in the form *Baal-zebul*, the "Lord of flies" (probably as sending or averting the swarms of flies or locusts that are one of the plagues of the East), as the name of a god worshipped by the Philistines at Ekron, and consulted as an oracle

(2 Kings i. 2) in cases of disease. (2.) Later Jews, identifying all heathen deities with evil spirits, saw in the god of their nearest and most hated neighbours the chief or prince of those "demons," and in their scorn transformed the name into *Baal-zebel*, which would mean "Lord of dung," or *Baal-zebul* "Lord of the dwelling"—i.e., of the house of the evil spirits who are the enemies of God. Our Lord's connection of the name with the "strong man's house" here, with "the master of the house" in Matt. x. 25, seems to point to the latter meaning as that present to our Lord's thoughts. The reference is clearly made to the charge that had already been implied in Matt. ix. 34.

(23) Said unto them in parables.—The word is used in its wider sense, as including any form of argument from analogy more or less figurative. As in most reports of discourses as distinct from facts, St. Mark is somewhat briefer than St. Matthew.

How can Satan cast out Satan.—In the Greek the name has the article in both places, as pointing to the one great adversary. It is not that one Satan casts out another, but that he, on the assumption of the Pharisees, casts out himself. Satan is not personally identified with the demon, the deaf or dumb spirit, that had possessed the man, but the language implies that where evil enters into the soul, Satan enters also. (Comp. John

can Satan cast out Satan?

(24) And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

(25) And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand. (26) And

if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end. (27) No man can enter

^a Matt.
12, 21.

into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house. (28) Verily

I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men,* and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme:

(29) but he that shall blas-

xiii. 27.) There is, as it were, a seeming ubiquity, a *solidarité*, in the power of evil, as there is admittedly in the sovereign Power of good.

(24) **If a kingdom be divided against itself.**—The answer assumes, as the teaching of the New Testament does from first to last, the existence of a kingdom of evil, compact and organised, with a distinct unity of purpose. The laws which govern the life of other kingdoms are applicable to that also. Its head and ruler was not likely to enter on a work which was self-destructive. Reason, calmness, peace, the conversion of the maddened soul to God as the Father, these were not his gifts to men.

(27) **No man can enter into a strong man's house.**—The parable implied in the question appears in a fuller form in Luke xi. 21, 22. Here it will be enough to note that the "strong man" is Satan. The "house" is the region which is subject to him—i.e., either the world at large, or the spirits of individual men; the "goods" or "instruments" (comp. the "armour" of Luke xi. 22) are the demons or subordinate powers

of evil by which he maintains his dominion; the "binding of the strong man" is the check given to the tyranny of Satan by emancipating the possessed sufferers from their thralldom; the "spoiling of the house" implies the final victory over him.

(29) **But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost.**—The question, What is the nature of the terrible sin thus excluded from forgiveness? has, naturally enough, largely occupied the thoughts of men. What, we ask, is this blasphemy against the Holy Ghost? (1.) The context at least helps us to understand something of its nature. The Pharisees were warned against a sin to which they were drawing perilously near. To condemn the Christ as a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber (Matt. xi. 19), as breaking the Sabbath (chap. ii. 44), or blaspheming when He said, "Thy sins be forgiven thee" (chap. ii. 7), was to speak a word against the Son of Man. These offences might be sins of ignorance, not implying more than narrowness and prejudice. But to see a man delivered from the power of Satan

pheine against the Holy

| Ghost hath never forgive

unto God, to watch the work of the Spirit of God, and then to ascribe that work to the power of evil, this was to be out of sympathy with goodness and mercy altogether. In such a character there was no opening for repentance, and therefore none for forgiveness. The capacity for goodness in any form was destroyed by this kind of antagonism. (2.) We dare not say, and our Lord does not say it, that the Pharisees had actually committed this sin, but it was towards this that they were drifting. And in reference to later times, we may say that this is the ultimate stage of antagonism to God and to His truth, when the clearest proofs of divine power and goodness are distorted into evidence that the power is evil. The human nature in that extremest debasement has identified itself with the devil nature, and must share its doom.

In danger of eternal damnation.—Better, *eternal judgment*, the Greek word not necessarily carrying with it the thoughts that now attach to the English. The best MSS., however, give, *in danger of an eternal sin*—i.e., of one which will, with its consequences, extend throughout the ages. It is, of course, more probable that a transcriber should have altered "sin" into "judgment," substituting an easier for a more difficult rendering, than the converse.

St. Matthew states the same fact by the words, "Neither in this world, nor in the world to come." The distinction was hardly the same for our Lord's Jewish listeners as it has come to be with us. For them "this world"—better, perhaps, *this*

age—was the time before the coming of the Christ; "the age to come" was that which was to follow it. (Comp. Heb. vi. 5, Luke xviii. 30.) Our Lord thus stood on the boundary-line of the two ages, that of the Law and the Prophets, and that of the Kingdom of Heaven, and He declares that while all personal outrages to Himself as the Son of Man, i.e., the Christ, are capable of forgiveness, this enmity against goodness, as good, shuts it out in both. Practically, however, the order of things since the first coming of the Christ has been one of slow and continuous growth, not of rapid and complete change. There has been no "age to come" such as the Jew dreamt of, and we still practically wait for its manifestation, and think of ourselves as still living in "*this world*," in "*this age*," and of the "world to come" as lying in the far future, or, for each individual soul, beyond the grave. Our Lord's words, it may be noted, clearly imply that some sins wait for their full forgiveness, the entirely cancelling of the past, till the time of that "age to come" which shall witness the great and final Advent. Does this imply that repentance, and therefore pardon, may come in the state that follows death? We know not, and ask questions that we cannot answer, but the words at least check the harsh dogmatic answer in the negative. If one sin only is thus expressly excluded from forgiveness in that "coming age," the natural inference is that other sins cannot stand on the same level, and the darkness behind the veil is lit up with at least a gleam of hope.

ness, but is in danger
of eternal damnation :
(30) because they said,

He hath an unclean
spirit.

(31) There came then his

(30) **Because they said.**—This, it will be noted, is peculiar to St. Mark. It is as though he would explain to his readers what it was that had called forth so awful a warning. He does not absolutely identify what had been said with the sin against the Holy Ghost, but it tended to that sin, and therefore made the warning necessary.

(31—35) **There came then his brethren and his mother.**—Who were these “brethren of the Lord?” The question is one which we cannot answer with any approximation to certainty. The facts in the Gospel records are scanty. In what we gather from the Fathers we find not so much traditions as conjectures based upon assumptions. The facts, such as they are, are these: (1.) The Greek word translated “brother” is a word which has just the same latitude as the term in English. Like that, it might be applied (as in the case of Joseph and his brethren) to half-brothers, or brothers by adoption, or used in the wider sense of national or religious brotherhood. There is no adequate evidence that the term was applied to cousins as such. (2.) The names of four brethren are given in chap. vi. 3, as James (*i.e.*, Jacob) and Joses and Juda and Simon. Three of these names (James, Juda, Simon) are found in the third group of four in the lists of the twelve Apostles. This has suggested to some the thought that they had been chosen by our Lord to that office, and the

fact that a disciple bearing the name of Joses was nearly chosen to fill the place of Judas Iscariot (Acts i. 23, in many MSS.) presents another curious coincidence. This inference, natural as it might otherwise seem, is, however, set aside by the fact distinctly stated by St. John (vii. 3), and implied in this narrative and in our Lord’s reference to a prophet being without honour in his father’s house (chap. vi. 4; Matt. xiii. 57), that up to the time of the Feast of Tabernacles that preceded the Crucifixion, within six months of the close of our Lord’s ministry, His brethren did not believe in His claims to be the Christ. In Acts i. 14 they are named as altogether distinct from the Apostles. The names, it must be remembered, were so common that they might be found probably in any family in Galilee or Judæa. (3.) Sisters are mentioned in chap. vi. 3, but we know nothing of their number, or names, or after-history, or belief or unbelief. It is clear that these facts do not enable us to decide whether the “brothers” and “sisters” were children of Mary and Joseph, or children of Joseph by a former marriage—either an actual marriage on his own account, or what was known as a Levirate marriage (Deut. xxv. 5), for the sake of raising up seed to a deceased brother—or, as many have thought, the children of Mary’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas (John xix. 25). The fact of the same name being borne by two sisters, as the last theory implies, though strange, is not

brethren and his mother,^a a Matt. 12. 46. | and, standing without, sent

incredible, as by-names might come into play to distinguish between them. Each of these views has been maintained with much elaborate ingenuity, and by some writers these brethren, assumed to be sons of Clopas, have been identified (in spite of the objection based on the unbelief of the "brethren," which at least seems absolutely fatal to the theory) with the "sons of Alphæus" in the list of Apostles, that name being regarded as another form of Clopas. When the course of Christian thought led to an ever-increasing reverence for the mother of the Lord, and for virginity as the condition of all higher forms of holiness the belief in her perpetual maidenhood passed into a dogma, and drove men to fall back upon some hypothesis as to the "brethren," other than that they were her children. It is a slight argument in favour of this view, (1) that it would have been natural, had there been other children borne by the mother of the Lord, that the fact should have been recorded by the Evangelists, as in the family narratives of the Old Testament (*e.g.*, Gen. v., xi.; 1 Chron. i., ii.), and that there is no record of any such birth in either of the two Gospels that give "the book of the generations" of Jesus; (2) that the tone of the brethren, their unbelief, their attempts to restrain Him, suggest the thought of their being *elder* brothers in some sense, rather than such as had been trained in reverential love for the first-born of the house; (3) that it is scarcely probable that our Lord should have committed His mother to the care

of the disciple whom He loved (John xix. 26) had she had children of her own, whose duty it was to protect and cherish her; (4) the absence of any later mention of the sisters at or after the time of the Crucifixion suggests the same conclusion, as falling in with the idea of the sisters and brethren being in some sense a distinct family, with divided interests; (5) lastly, though we enter here on the uncertain region of feeling, if we accept the narratives of the birth and infancy given by St. Matthew and St. Luke, it is at least conceivable that the mysterious awfulness of the work so committed to him may have led Joseph to rest in the task of loving guardianship which thus became at once the duty and the blessedness of the remainder of his life. The absence of any mention of Joseph after the incident of Luke ii. 41—51, suggests as probable the inference that he was already advanced in years at the time of his betrothal to the Virgin. On the whole, then, there seems most ground for the belief that the so-called "brethren" and "sisters" were either children of Joseph by a former marriage, or cousins who, through some unrecorded circumstances, had been so far adopted into the household at Nazareth as to be known by the term of nearer relationship. The former hypothesis seems, on the whole, to have most to commend it, and is maintained by Dr. Lightfoot in an *Excursus* on the subject in his *Commentary on the Galatians*, and by the present writer in the Introduction to his edition of the *Epistle of St. James*.

unto him, calling him.

(32) And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee.

(33) And he answered them,

saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren? (34) And

he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! (35) For whosoever shall do the will

The motive which led the mother and the brethren to seek to speak to our Lord on this occasion lies on the surface of the narrative. (See Note on verse 21.) Never before in His Galilean ministry had He stood out in such open antagonism to the scribes and Pharisees both of Capernaum and Jerusalem. It became known that they had taken counsel with the followers of the tetrarch against His life (verse 6). Was He not going too far in thus daring them to the uttermost? Was it not necessary to break in upon the discourse which was so keen and stinging in its reproofs? The tone of protest and, as it were, disclaimer in which He now speaks of this attempt to control and check His work, shows what their purpose was. His brethren, St. John reports, did not believe in Him (John vii. 3—5)—i.e., they did not receive Him as the Christ, perhaps not even as a prophet of the Lord. It lies on the surface that they had either followed Him to Capernaum, or were, perhaps, residing there, as He did (Matt. iv. 13), so that it was now their city as well as His (Matt. ix. 1).

(32) **Thy mother and thy brethren.**—Many MSS. of high authority add, "and Thy sisters," and so explain the emphatic addition of that word in verse 35.

(34) **And he looked round about.**—Literally, *looking round*

on those who sat in a circle round Him. Another graphic touch of this Evangelist.

Behold my mother and my brethren.—The words assert in its strongest form the truth which we all acknowledge, that though natural relationships involve duties which may not be neglected, spiritual relationships, the sense of brotherhood in a great cause, of devotion to the same Master, are above them, and that when the two clash (as in the case supposed in Matt. x. 37), the latter must of right prevail.

The words have naturally occupied a prominent position in the controversial writings of Protestants against what has been judged by them to be the idolatrous worship of the Virgin Mother by the Church of Rome; and it is clear that they have a very direct bearing on it. They do exclude the thought that her intercession is mightier to prevail than that of any other pure and saintly soul. Though spoken with no apparent reference to the abuses of later ages, the words are a protest, all the stronger because of the absence of such reference, against the excess of reverence which has passed into a *cultus*, and the virtual, if not formal, idolatry of dressed-up dolls into which that *cultus* has developed.

(35) **Whosoever shall do the**

of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.

CHAPTER IV. —

(1) And he began again to teach by the sea side :^a and there was gathered unto

A.D. 31.

^a Matt.
13. 1.

him a great multitude, so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea ; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land. ⁽²⁾ And he taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in his doctrine,

will.—This is, then, what Christ recognises as the ground of a spiritual relationship. Not outward but inward fellowship ; not the mere fact of baptism, but that which baptism signifies ; that doing the will of God, which is the essence of holiness—this is that which makes the disciple as dear to the heart of Christ as was the mother whom He loved so truly.

Sister, and mother.—The special mention of the sister confirms the reading in verse 32, which states that those who bore that name had joined the mother and the brethren in their attempt to interrupt the divine work.

A comparison of this narrative with that of the marriage at Cana (John ii. 4) is interesting as showing in this respect an identity of character and of action in the representation of our Lord given by writers who, in many ways, differ very widely.

IV.

(1—20) **He began again to teach.**—In St. Mark the parable of the Sower follows the appearance of the mother and the brethren, as in St. Matthew (xii. 46—50 ; xiii. 1, 2), but in St. Luke (viii. 4—15, 19—21) the order is inverted. In this case the order of the first two Gospels seems preferable, as

giving a more intelligible sequence of events. The malignant accusation of the Pharisees, the plots against His life, the absence of real support where He might most have looked for it, the opposition roused by the directness of His teaching—this led to His presenting that teaching in a form which was at once more attractive, less open to attack, better as an intellectual and spiritual training for His disciples, better also as a test of character, and therefore an education for the multitude.

That our Lord had been speaking in a house up to this point is implied in the “standing without” of xii. 46. He now turns to the crowd that followed, and lest the pressure should interrupt or might occasion—as the feeling roused by the teaching that immediately preceded made probable enough—some hostile attack, He enters a boat, probably with a few of His disciples, puts a few yards of water between Himself and the crowd, and then begins to speak.

(2) **He taught them many things by parables.**—This is the first occurrence of the word in this Gospel, and it is clear from the question of the disciples in verse 10 that it was in some sense a new form of teaching to them. There had been illustrations and

(3) Hearken ; Behold, there went out a sower to sow :
(4) and it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the

way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up. (5) And some fell on stony ground, where it had

similitudes before, as in that of the houses built on the sand and on the rock in Matt. vii. 24—27, and that of the unclean spirit in Matt. xii. 43—45, but now for the first time He speaks to the multitude in a parable, without an explanation. The word, which has passed through its use in the Gospels into most modern European languages (*palabras, parole, parabel*), means literally, *a comparison*. It had been employed by the Greek translators of the Old Testament for the Hebrew word *mashâl*, which we commonly render by “proverb,” and which, like the Greek *parabolê*, has the sense of similitude. Of many, perhaps of most, Eastern proverbs it was true that they were condensed parables, just as many parables are expanded proverbs. (Comp. John xvi. 25, 29.) In the later and New Testament use of the word, however, the parable takes the fuller form of a narrative embracing facts natural and probable in themselves, and in this respect differs from the “fable” which (as in those of Æsop and Phædrus, or that of the trees choosing a king in Judg. ix. 8—15, or the marriage offer from the thistle to the cedar, 2 Chron. xxv. 18) does not keep within the limits even of possibility. The mode of teaching by parables was familiar enough in the schools of the Rabbis, and the Talmud contains many of great beauty and interest. As used by them, however, they were regarded as belonging to those who were receiving a higher education, and

the son of Sirach was expressing the current feeling of the schools when he said of the tillers of the soil and the herdsmen of flocks that they “were not found where parables were spoken” (Ecclus. xxxviii. 33). With what purpose our Lord now used this mode of instruction will appear in his answer to the question of the disciples. The prominence given in the first three Gospels to the parable that follows shows how deep an impression it made on the minds of men, and so far justified the choice of this method of teaching by the divine Master.

(2) **A sower.**—Literally, *the sower*—the man whose form and work were so familiar, in the seed-time of the year, to the peasants of Galilee. The outward framework of the parable requires us to remember the features in which Eastern tillage differs from our own: the ground less perfectly cleared—the road passing across the field—the rock often cropping out, or lying under an inch or two of soil—the patch of good ground rewarding, by what might be called a lucky chance rather than skill of husbandry, the labour of the husbandman.

(4) **The way side**—i.e., on the skirts of the broad path that crossed the field. Here the surface was hard and smooth; the grain lay on the surface; the pigeons and other birds that followed the sower reaped an immediate harvest, and were the only reapers.

(5) **Stony ground.**—Either

not much earth ; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth : ⁽⁶⁾ but when the sun was up, it was scorched ; and because it had no root, it withered away. ⁽⁷⁾ And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no

fruit. ⁽⁸⁾ And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased ; and brought forth some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred. ⁽⁹⁾ And he said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. ⁽¹⁰⁾ And when he was alone, they that

ground in which stones and pebbles were mingled with the soil, or, more probably, as is, indeed, definitely stated in Luke viii. 6, "on the rock," where a thin stratum of earth covered the solid rock. Here, of course, growth was rapid through the very circumstance which was afterwards fatal.

⁽⁶⁾ **Because it had no root.**—Or, as in Luke viii. 6, "because they lacked moisture." The growth had been over-rapid, and the presence of the underlying rock at once made the heat more intense, and deprived the plant of the conditions of resistance, while the hollowness of the surface layer of earth prevented the growth of the root fibres and the retention of moisture by the soil.

⁽⁷⁾ **Among thorns.**—Literally, *the thorns*, so familiar to the husbandman. They were probably the *Ononis spinosa*, the English "rest-harrow," which often covers entire fields both in Egypt and Palestine. These were not visible at the time of sowing. The ground had been so far cleared, but the roots were left below the surface, and their growth and that of the grain went on simultaneously, and ended in the survival, not of the fittest, but of the strongest. The

ears shot up, and did not die suddenly, as in the preceding case, but were slowly strangled till they died away.

⁽⁸⁾ **On good ground.**—Here also the Greek has the definite article, "*the* good ground." The different results imply that even here there were different degrees of fertility. The hundredfold return was, perhaps, a somewhat uncommon increase, but the narrative of Isaac's tillage in Gen. xxvi. 12 shows that it was not unheard of, and had probably helped to make it the standard of a more than usually prosperous harvest.

Some thirty . . .—For the most part the parable is almost verbally identical with that in St. Matthew. Here, however, we note the difference, sufficient to establish a certain measure of independence, of an ascending instead of a descending scale.

⁽⁹⁾ **He that hath ears to hear.**—The formula had been used before (comp. Matt. xi. 15). It was probably familiar in the schools of the Rabbis, when they were testing the ingenuity or progress of their scholars.

⁽¹⁰⁾ **They that were about him.**—In St. Matthew, simply, "the disciples." Here the presence

were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable. ⁽¹¹⁾ And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God :

a Matt.
13 14.

but unto them that are without, all *these* things are done in parables : ⁽¹²⁾ that seeing they may see,^a and not perceive ; and hearing they may hear, and not

of others with Him in the boat besides the Twelve is directly asserted. The better MSS. give the plural, *parables*.

⁽¹¹⁾ **It is given.**—Better, *it has been given*, as by the special act of God.

To know the mysteries.—The Greek word, like “parable,” has passed into modern languages, and has suffered some change of meaning in the process. Strictly speaking, it does not mean, as we sometimes use it—when we speak, *e.g.*, of the mystery of the Trinity—a truth which none can understand—something “awfully obscure” (the definition given in Johnson’s *Dictionary*), but one which, kept a secret from others, has been revealed to the initiated. Interpreted by our Lord’s teaching up to this time, the mysteries of the kingdom may be referred to the new birth of water and the Spirit (John iii. 5), the judgment to be exercised hereafter by the Son of Man (John v. 25), the power of the Son of Man to forgive sins (ix. 6), the new ideas (no other word will express the fact so well) which he had proclaimed as to the Sabboth (xii. 8), and fasting, and prayer, and alms (vi. 1—18). Those ideas had been proved occasions of offence, and therefore, for the present, the Teacher falls back upon a method of more exoteric instruction. Comp. St. Paul’s use of the words as connected with the Resurrection (1 Cor.

xv. 51), the unity of mankind in Christ (Eph. iii. 4), the union of Christ and His Church (Eph. v. 32). In later ecclesiastical language the word became interchangeable with *sacramentum*, and is so translated in the Vulgate of Eph. v. 32.

Unto them that are without.—The form of the phrase is peculiar to St. Mark; St. Matthew giving “to them,” and St. Luke, “to the rest.”

⁽¹²⁾ **That seeing they may see . . .**—St. Mark characteristically gives the words of Isa. vi. 9, but not as a quotation, and perhaps in a less accurate form, and omits the addition in St. Matthew, “Blessed are your ears . . .” The form in this instance, at first sight, suggests the thought that our Lord’s purpose was to produce the blindness and deafness of which He speaks. The real meaning of the words is, however, plain. This was to be the result of the wilful blindness of those who rejected him ; and the acceptance of a foreseen result was, in Hebrew forms of thought, expressed as the working out of an intention.

And not perceive.—In one aspect, then, the parable was a veil hiding the truth from them, because they did not seek the truth, and this was the working of the divine law of retribution. But even here we may venture to trace beneath the penalty an element of mercy. The parable could, at all

understand ; lest at any time they should be converted, and *their* sins should be forgiven them. ⁽¹³⁾ And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable ? and how then will ye know all parables ?

⁽¹⁴⁾ The sower soweth the word. ⁽¹⁵⁾ And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown ; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their

events, do men no harm. It could not rouse the fierce enmity that had been kindled by truth spoken in its plainness. And it might prepare the way, might set men thinking and questioning ; and if so, that was at least one step towards the "having," though it were but a very little, which might place them among those to whom more shall be given, among the converted to whom much shall be forgiven.

⁽¹³⁾ **How then will ye know all parables?**—The question is peculiar to St. Mark, and suggests the thought of our Lord as contemplating for His disciples an ever-growing insight, not only into His own spoken parables, but into those of nature and of life. But if they were such slow scholars in this early stage, how was that insight to be imparted ? The question is followed up by the answer. The first lesson in interpreting is given in that which is a pattern and exemplar of the method of interpretation.

⁽¹⁵⁾ **These are they by the way side.**—The explanation has become so familiar to us that it is hard to place ourselves in the position of those to whom it was the unveiling of new truths—the holding up a mirror in which they might see, it might be, their own likeness. Our interest in it may, perhaps, be

quickened if we think of it as reflecting what had actually been our Lord's experience. The classes of hearers who had gathered round Him were represented, roughly and generally, by the four issues of the seed scattered by the sower ; and all preachers of the truth, from that day to this, have felt that their own experience has presented analogous phenomena.

The ethical sequence described runs thus : The man hears "the word of the kingdom," a discourse, say, like the Sermon on the Mount, or that at Nazareth (Luke iv. 16—21). He does not "understand" it (the fault being moral rather than intellectual), does not attend to it or "take it in." "Satan" (St. Mark), the "wicked one" (St. Matthew), (note the connection with the clause in the Lord's Prayer, "Deliver us from evil," or *the evil one*) snatches it away even from his memory. At first it seems strange that "the birds of the air" in their multitude should represent the Tempter in his unity ; and yet there is a terrible truth in the fact that everything which leads men to forget the truth is, in very deed, doing the work of the great enemy. On the other hand, the birds, in their rapid flight and their gathering flocks, may well represent the light and foolish thoughts that are as the

hearts. ⁽¹⁶⁾ And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; ⁽¹⁷⁾ and have no root in

themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended. ⁽¹⁸⁾ And these are they which are sown among

Tempter's instruments. The "way-side" thus answers to the character which is hardened by the wear and tear of daily life, what we well call its *routine*, so that the words of Truth make hardly even the most transient impression on it.

⁽¹⁶⁾ **Immediately receive it with gladness.**—The second type of character stands in marked contrast with the first. Rapid change, strong emotion, a quicker show of conversion than in the case where it is more real—such results, it need hardly be said, come under the notice of every earnest preacher. In proportion to the tendency of any system—such as the revivalist meetings of one school, the mission services of another—to cause excitement, are those results likely to be frequent.

⁽¹⁷⁾ **And have no root in themselves.**—The "root" is obviously the conviction which ripens into a purpose and strikes its fibres deep down into reason, conscience, and will.

Affliction or persecution.—It is hardly necessary, or indeed possible, to draw any sharp line of demarcation between the two. "Persecution" implies, perhaps, a more organised attack, and therefore greater suffering; "tribulation," the thousand petty annoyances to which every convert to the faith of Christ was exposed in the

first age of the Church, and to which, it may be added, even now most men and women who seek to be Christians in deed as well as in name are at some time or other in their lives exposed. The words explain the "time of temptation" in St. Luke's report (Luke viii. 13).

Immediately they are offended.—The adverb is characteristic of St. Mark (see Note on chap. i. 28). The rapidity of the renegade matches that of the convert. Such a man finds a "stumbling-block" in the sufferings he is called to endure, and turns into a smoother path.

⁽¹⁸⁾ **These are they which are sown among thorns.**—Here there is no over-rapid growth, and there is some depth of earth. The character is not one that wastes its strength in vague emotions, but has the capacity for sustained effort. The evil here is, that while there is some strength of will, there is not unity of spirit. The man is double-minded, and would fain serve two masters. The "cares of this world" (the word is the root of the verb "take no thought" in Matt. vi. 25), the deceitfulness of earthly riches—cheating the soul with its counterfeit shows of good—these choke the "word" in its inner life, and it becomes "unfruitful." There may be some signs of fruitfulness, perhaps the

thorns ; such as hear the word, ⁽¹⁹⁾ and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches,^a and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.

^a 1 Tim.
6. 17.

⁽²⁰⁾ And these are they which are sown on good ground ; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.

"blade" and the "ear" of partial reformation and strivings after holiness, but there is no "full corn in the ear." In St. Luke's words, such men "bring no fruit to perfection" (Luke viii. 14). To the simpler root-forms of evil in St. Matthew, St. Mark adds "the lusts (or desires) about other things"—i.e., the things that are other than the true life—and St. Luke, "the pleasures of life" to which wealth ministers, and for the sake of which, therefore, men pursue it.

⁽²⁰⁾ Such as hear the word, and receive it.—The process is not merely an intellectual one. He takes it in, discerns its meaning. The phrases in the other Gospels express the same thing, "hear the word and receive it" (Mark), "in an honest and good heart" hear and retain it (Luke). Even here, however, there are different degrees of the holiness which is symbolised by "bearing fruit"—"some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty"—varying according to men's capacities and opportunities. St. Luke adds, it may be noted, "bring forth fruit with patience," or better, *perseverance*.

It is allowable to fill up the outline sketch of interpretation which thus formed the first lesson in this method of teaching in the great Master's school. (1.) It may seem

strange at first that the disciples were not told who in the work of the kingdom answered to "the Sower" of the parable. The interpretation is given in the parable of the Tares ("the Sower of the good seed is the Son of Man"), and, in part, it may be said that this was the one point on which the disciples were not likely to misunderstand Him ; but in part also, we may believe, this explanation was not given, because, though the parable was true in the first instance of Him and of His work, He meant them to learn wisdom from it for their own work. True, they were reaping what they had not sown (John iv. 38), yet they too were in their turn to be sowers as well as reapers. (2.) It is obviously one important lesson of the parable that it teaches us to recognise the possible existence of "an honest and good heart" (the first word meaning "noble," "generous," rather than "honest" in our modern sense) prior to the preaching of the word. Such characters were to be found in those living under the Law, or without the Law (Rom. ii. 14), and it was the work of the preacher to look out for them, and win them to something yet higher. What made the ground good, is a question which the parable was perhaps meant to suggest, but does not answer. Theologians may speak

(21) And he said unto them,^a Is a candle brought ^{a Matt. 5. 15.} to be put under a bushel,¹ ^{1 The word in the} or under a bed? and not to

original signifieth a less measure, as Matt. 5. 15.

of "prevenient grace." The language of John iv. 37, 38, leads us to think of the work of "the Light that lighteth every man." Here also the law holds good that "to him that hath shall more be given" (Matt. xiii. 11). (3.) It lies in the nature of such a parable that it represents the phenomena of the spiritual life only partially. It brings before us four classes of hearers, and seems to assume that their characters are fixed, incapable of change, issuing in results which might have been foreseen from the first, and could not have been other than they were. But if so, then the work of the "word" thus preached would seem to be limited to development and progress, and the idea of "conversion"—the change of character, which is pre-supposed as the very aim of the act of preaching—would almost, or altogether, be excluded. We must therefore supplement the parable in its practical application. The soil may be improved; the wayside and the stony places and that which contained the thorns may come to be as the good ground. It is the work of every preacher and teacher to prepare the soil as well as to sow the seed. In the words of an older prophet, which might almost seem to have suggested the parable itself, they are to "break up the fallow ground and sow not among thorns" (Jer. iv. 3).

(21) Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel?—The recurrence of the same similitude on

four distinct occasions—here, Matt. v. 18, Luke viii. 16, xi. 33—may fairly be regarded as shewing that it was one of the illustrations which our Lord employed most freely, presenting it now under one aspect, now under another, as the circumstances of the case required. The word so rendered was probably a portable lamp rather than a candle in the common meaning of the word. The candles of the seven-branched candlestick of the Temple were undoubtedly lamps supplied with oil (Zech. iv. 2, 12) and so probably were the "candles" of household use. The word is not the same, however, as that used for the "lamps" of the Wise and Foolish Virgins (Matt. xxv. 1), and was applied apparently to the cheaper vessels of the poor rather than to those of the wealthy. Wiclif translates it "lantern."

The image was drawn from objects familiar to all the hearers, and the presence of the article in the Greek, "under the bushel," "on the candlestick or lampstand," implies the familiarity. Each cottage had one such article of furniture. The "bushel" was a Latin measure, nearly the same as the English peck. It adds to the interest of the illustration to remember that as they were commonly of wood, such articles as these must often have been turned out from the carpenter's shop at Nazareth for the use of its neighbours. It should also be remembered that the self-same word for "light" or "candle" had been applied a

be set on a candlestick?

(22) For there is nothing hid,^a which shall not be manifested; neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad.

(23) If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. (24) And

^a Matt.

10. 26.

^b Matt.

7. 2.

^c Matt.

13. 12.

he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete,^b it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given. (25) For he that hath,^c to him shall be given: and he that hath

short time before by our Lord to the Baptist (John v. 35). His disciples were in this way to continue the Baptist's work. St. Mark, it will be noted, omits all the other parables that follow in St. Matthew, and connects with that of the Sower sayings more or less proverbial, which in St. Matthew appear in a different context. Looking at our Lord's method of teaching by the repetition of proverbs under different aspects and on different occasions, it is not unlikely that this of the "candle" was actually spoken in the connection in which we find it here. Their knowledge of the meaning of the parable was not given them for themselves alone, but was to shine forth to others. We probably owe to the saying so uttered the record of this parable given in three out of the four Gospels.

(22) **For there is nothing hid.**—This also is found elsewhere (in Matt. x. 26, Luke xii. 27). The Greek word here for "secret" is interesting as being the same as that which we find in our word "Apocrypha." The term was, in the first instance, applied to books that were surrounded with the secrecy of a spurious sacredness, but were not publicly recognised in the Church as being of divine authority, and was then transferred to all books

which, whether "spurious" or "secret," wanted that recognition.

(24) **With what measure ye mete.**—The proverb furnishes a good illustration of what has just been said as to our Lord's method of presenting the same truth under different aspects. In the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. vii. 2, Luke vi. 38), it appears as the law of retribution, which brings pardon to those who pardon, judgment without mercy to those who show no mercy. Here the law works in another region. With the measure with which we mete our knowledge, God will, in His bounty, bestow more knowledge upon us. The old maxim, *Docendo discas* ("Thou wilt learn by teaching"), becomes here more than the lesson of experience, and is one with the divine law of equity.

(25) **For he that hath.**—The words have the ring of a proverb applicable, in its literal meaning, to the conditions of prosperity in the world. There fortune smiles on the fortunate, and nothing succeeds like success. Something like that law, our Lord tells His disciples (here, and in Matt. xiii. 12, xxv. 29, Luke viii. 18, xix. 26), is to be found in the conditions of spiritual growth in wisdom. They had some elements of that wisdom, and therefore, using their know-

not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath.

(26) And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into

the ground; ⁽²⁷⁾ and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. ⁽²⁸⁾ For the earth bringeth forth

ledge rightly, could pass on to more. The people, including even scribes and Pharisees, were as those that had few or none, and not using even the little that they had, were in danger of losing even that. The faithless Jew was sinking down to the level of a superstitious heathen. The proverb accordingly teaches the same lesson as that which we afterwards find developed in the parables of the Talents and the Pounds (Matt. xxv. 14—30; Luke xix. 12—27).

(26) **As if a man should cast seed into the ground.**—What follows, has the special interest of being the only parable peculiar to St. Mark, one therefore which had escaped the manifest eagerness of St. Matthew and St. Luke to gather up all that they could find of this form of our Lord's teaching. It runs to some extent parallel with the parable of the Sower, as though it had been given as another and easier lesson in the art of understanding parables; and if we assume a connection between St. Mark and St. Peter, it may be regarded as having in this way made a special impression on the mind of the Apostle. He had discovered its meaning for himself, had interpreted it by his own experience. Like many other parables, it finds a two-fold interpretation in the analogous phenomena of the growth of the Kingdom (1) in the world at large, (2) in the

heart of each individual. Speaking roughly, the Sower is, as before, either the Son of Man or the preacher of His word, and the ground falls under one or other of the heads just defined in the previous parable, with, perhaps, a special reference to the good ground, there being, in this case, no indication of any failure.

(27) **And should sleep, and rise.**—So it was with the progress of the Kingdom of God, *i.e.*, of the Church of Christ, in the world's history. Men knew not the greatness of the new force that had been brought into action. Philosophers and statesmen ignored it. Even the very preachers of the new faith, the "sowers" of the parable, were hardly conscious of the enormous revolution which they were working. So it is in the individual life. The seemingly chance word, the new truth that flashes on the soul as a revelation, the old words now for the first time apprehended in their true force, these prove to be the seeds of a new growth in the soul.

(28) **The earth bringeth forth fruit of herself.**—Stress is laid on the spontaneity of growth; and the lesson drawn from it is obviously one at once of patience and of faith. It is not well in the spiritual husbandry, either of the nations of the world or of individual souls, to be taking up the seeds to see whether they are

fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. ⁽²⁰⁾ But when the fruit is brought forth,¹ immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.

a Matt.
13. 31.

1 Or, ripe.

⁽³⁰⁾ And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? ^a or with what comparison shall we compare it? ⁽³¹⁾ *It is like* a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all

growing. It is wiser to sow the seed, and to believe that sun and rain will quicken it. Thus the words find an interesting parallel, like, and yet different, in the precept of Eccles. xi. 6, "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand."

First the blade, then the ear.—Following the same lines as before, we have (1) three stages in the growth of the Church of Christ in the field of the world, and (2) three like stages representing the influence of the new truth on thoughts, purposes, acts, in the individual soul.

⁽²⁰⁾ **He putteth in the sickle.**—From one point of view, here again, the harvest is the end of the world (Matt. xiii. 39), and the putting in the sickle is the coming of Christ to judge. (Comp. the use of the same image in Rev. xiv. 14—18.) From the other, the harvest is the end of each man's life, and the sickle is in the hands of the Angel of Death.

⁽³⁰⁾ **With what comparison shall we compare it?**—Literally, *By what parable shall we set it forth?* The question which introduces the parable is in St. Mark and St. Luke, but not in St. Matthew. It gives us the impression of a question asked, in order to put the minds of the

hearers on the stretch, so that they might welcome the answer. Such a question suggested that it belonged to them, and to those who should be teachers after them, not only to interpret parables, but to discover them in the countless phenomena which the world of creation brought before them.

^(31—32) **It is like a grain of mustard seed.**—The two parables that follow are left without an explanation, as though to train the disciples in the art of interpreting for themselves. And, so far as we can judge, they seem to have been equal to the task. They ask for the meaning of the Tares (Matt. xiii. 36), but we read of no question about these.

It is scarcely necessary to discuss at any length the botany of the parable. What we call mustard (*Sinapis nigra*) does not grow in the East, any more than with us, into anything that can be called a tree. Probably, however, the name was used widely for any plant that had the pungent flavour of mustard, and botanists have suggested the *Salvadora persica* as answering to the description. (See *Bible Educator*, I. 119.)

The interpretation of the parable lies almost on the surface. Here again the Sower is the Son of Man; but the seed in this case is not so

the seeds that be in the earth: ⁽³²⁾ but when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.

⁽³³⁾ And with many such parables spake he the word

a Matt.
13. 34.

b Matt.
8. 23.

unto them,^a as they were able to hear it. ⁽³⁴⁾ But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples. ⁽³⁵⁾ And the same day,^b when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the

much the "word," as the Christian society, the Church, which forms, so to speak, the firstfruits of the word. As it then was, even as it was on the day of Pentecost, it was smaller than any sect or party in Palestine or Greece or Italy. It was sown in God's field of the world, but it was to grow till it became greater than any sect or school, a tree among the trees of the forest, a kingdom among other kingdoms (comp. the imagery of Ezek. xxxi. 3; Dan. iv. 10), a great organised society; and the "birds of the air" (no longer, as before, in verse 4, the emblems of evil)—i.e., the systems of thought, institutions, and the like, of other races—were to find refuge under its protection. History has witnessed many fulfilments of the prophecy implied in the parable, as, e.g., in the conversion first of the Greek and Roman world, and afterwards of the Teutonic and Celtic races, and those who believe that the life of Christendom is an abiding life will look for yet more. Slight variations in this report are (1) the "great branches," and (2) the birds lodging "under the shadow" of the tree.

⁽³¹⁾ Less than all the seeds. —The description is, of course, po-

pular, and need not be pressed with microscopical exactness.

⁽³²⁾ Greater than all herbs. —More literally, *greater than the herbs*—i.e., belonging to a higher order of vegetation.

⁽³³⁻³⁴⁾ And with many such parables.—St. Mark's omission of the reference to Ps. lxxviii. 2, given in Matt. xiii. 35, and his addition of "as they were able to hear it," are, each of them, characteristic. It may be noted that the "many such parables" of St. Mark imply something like the series which we find in St. Matthew xiii. 3—50, and that he thus recognises, though he does not report, them.

⁽³⁴⁾ He expounded. —The word may be noted as being the verb from which is formed the noun "interpretation" in 2 Pet. i. 20, and so takes its place in the coincidences of phraseology which connect that Epistle with this Gospel. (See *Introduction*.)

⁽³⁵⁻⁴¹⁾ And the same day.—Better, *in that day*. The connection of the events, as given by St. Mark, seems to be precise enough, but it differs widely from that in St. Matthew (viii. 23—27) and St. Luke (viii. 22—25), who, in their turn, differ from each other, and it must remain uncertain which was

other side. ⁽³⁶⁾ And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships. ⁽³⁷⁾ And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship,

so that it was now full. ⁽³⁸⁾ And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? ⁽³⁹⁾ And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said

the actual order. "In that day" might easily come to be as indefinite as the more familiar "in those days" of chaps. i. 9, viii. 1.

The other side.—The voyage was from Capernaum—from the west to the east side of the lake.

⁽³⁶⁾ **They took him even as he was.**—The phrase is peculiar to this Gospel, and seems to point to the impression made on the mind of St. Mark's informant (probably, *i.e.*, Peter) by the utter exhaustion that followed on the long day's labours. It was followed, as the sequel shews, by immediate sleep. St. John's statement that our Lord, on His journey through Samaria, "being wearied, . . . sat thus on the well" (John iv. 6), presents an interesting parallel.

⁽³⁷⁾ **There arose a great storm.**—The noun is used by Greek writers, Homer and others, for a hurricane with thick clouds and darkness. Storms such as that here described are of common occurrence in all inland seas. The wind sweeps through the narrow mountain valleys, and the sea, which a few minutes before was smooth as glass, is at once rough with the white crests of the foaming waves. The ship was on the point of sinking, as the waves dashed over it

while it was in the trough between them. It was beginning to be filled with water, and still He slept. Here again we note the natural phenomena of extreme exhaustion.

Beat into the ship, so that it was now full.—Better, *were beating upon the ship, so that it was filling*. Both verbs describe continuous action.

⁽³⁸⁾ **Asleep on a pillow.**—Better, *on the pillow*—the cushion commonly to be found in the boat's stern.

Carest thou not that we perish?—St. Mark alone gives this touch of despairing expostulation, in which we trace the specific want of faith which was afterwards reproved. They were doubting their Lord's will, as well as His power, to save them.

⁽³⁹⁾ **Rebuked the wind.**—This seems to have been almost, so to say, our Lord's formula in working miracles. The fever (Luke vi. 39), the frenzy of the demoniac (Mark ix. 25), the tempest, are all treated as if they were hostile and rebel forces that needed to be restrained. St. Mark, with his usual vividness, gives the very words of the rebuke: "Peace, be still"—literally, *be dumb, be muzzled* (as in chap. i. 25)—as though the

unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. ⁽⁴⁰⁾ And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith? ⁽⁴¹⁾ And they feared exceedingly, and said one

to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?

A.D. 31.

a Matt.
8. 28.

CHAPTER V.—⁽¹⁾ And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into

howling wind was a maniac to be gagged and bound. The same word is used for "putting to silence" (Matt. xxii. 34; 1 Pet. ii. 15), and in its literal sense in 1 Cor. ix. 9.

The wind ceased.—Better, *hushed*.

There was a great calm.—As with the fever in chap. i. 31, so here, the work was at once instantaneous and complete. There was no after-swell such as is commonly seen for hours after a storm.

⁽⁴⁰⁾ **How is it that ye have no faith?**—St. Luke puts the question as strongly: "Where is your faith?" as though it had already drifted away under the pressure of their fears. Yet the word, "of little faith," as given by St. Matthew (viii. 26), was singularly appropriate. They had not altogether lost their trust in Him, but they had not learnt the lesson of the centurion's faith (Matt. viii. 9), and were only at ease when they heard His voice, and saw that He was watching over them.

⁽⁴¹⁾ **They feared exceedingly.**—St. Matthew's words (viii. 27), "the men marvelled," suggest the thought that there were others in the boat with the disciples. The marvel was not without a "great fear." The Presence among them was mightier even than they had thought, and the elements, which

seemed far more removed from human control than leprosy or fever, were yet subject to His sovereignty.

The spiritual application of the miracle lies so near the surface that it has almost become one of the common-places of sermons and hymns. And yet there is a profound fitness in it which never ceases to be fresh. The boat is the Church of Christ, and it sails across the ocean of the world's history to the "other side" of the life beyond the grave. The wind is the blast of persecution, and the Lord of the Church seems as though He were asleep, and heard not the cry of the sufferers, and the disciples are faint-hearted and afraid. And then He hears their prayer, and the storm of the persecution ceases, and there is a great calm, during which the Church goes on its way, and men learn to feel that it carries more than Caesar and his fortunes.

V.

⁽¹⁾ **The country of the Gadarenes.**—The better MSS. give "Gerasenes," some "Gergesenes." The exact determination of the locality presents many difficulties. In all the three Gospels we find various readings, of which the best supported are Gadarenes in St. Matthew, and Gerasenes in St.

the country of the Gadarenes. ⁽²⁾ And when he

was come out of the ship, immediately there met him

Mark and St. Luke. "Gergesenes" is, however, found in some MSS. of high authority, and the variations are obviously of very early date. The main facts as to the three regions thus indicated are as follows:—

(1.) Gadara was a city east of the Sea of Galilee, about sixteen miles from Tiberias. It is identified with the modern *Um Keis*, the ruins of which are more than two miles in circumference, and stand at the north-west extremity of the mountains of Gilead, near the south-east corner of the Lake. The tombs of the city, chambers in the limestone rock often more than twenty feet square, are its most conspicuous feature, and are, indeed, the sole abode of its present inhabitants. Under the Roman occupation it was important enough to have two amphitheatres and a long colonnaded street.

(2.) Gerasa was a city in the Gilead district, twenty miles east of the Jordan, described sometimes as belonging to Coele-Syria, sometimes to Arabia. It also has ruins which indicate the former splendour of the city. Of these two, it is clear that Gadara fits in better with all the circumstances of the narrative; and if "Gerasenes" is more than the mistake of a transcriber, it could only be because the name was used vaguely for the whole Gilead district between the mountains and the lake. The reading "Gadarenes" in that case would probably come from some one better acquainted with the position of the two cities.

(3.) There was no city named

Gergesa, but the name Gergesenes was probably connected with the older Girgashites, one of the Canaanite races that occupied the country before the invasion of Israel (Gen. x. 16; xv. 21; Josh. iii. 10; xxiv. 11; *et al.*). Apparently, however, from the last passage referred to, they were on the western side of the Jordan. It is, on the whole, more likely that the reading was a mistake, than that the old tribe still remained with its old name; but it is possible that the name of Gerasa may represent an altered form of *Girgashim*.

(2) **A man with an unclean spirit.**—The phrase, though not peculiar to St. Mark, is often used by him where the other Gospels have "possessed with demons, or devils." St. Mark and St. Luke, it will be noticed, speak of one only; St. Matthew of two. A like difference meets us in St. Matthew's "two blind men" at Jericho (Matt. xx. 30) as compared with the "one" of the two other Gospels. The natural explanation is that, in each case, one was more prominent than the other in speech or act, and so was remembered and specified, while the other was either forgotten or left unnoticed. The difference, as far as it goes, is obviously in favour of the independence of each narrative. The "tombs" in the neighbourhood of Gadara, hewn out in the rock, have been already mentioned. To dwell in such tombs was, to the ordinary Jew, a thing from which he shrank with abhorrence, as bringing pollution, and to choose such an abode was therefore a sign of the insanity of "possession."

out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, ⁽³⁾ who had *his* dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains: ⁽⁴⁾ because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by

him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him. ⁽⁵⁾ And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones. ⁽⁶⁾ But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him, ⁽⁷⁾ and cried with a

St. Luke adds that he "wore no clothes" (i.e., strictly, no outer garment; the word does not imply actual nakedness). St. Mark (whose account is the fullest of the three) notices that he had often been bound with fetters and chains, and that, with the abnormal strength often found in mania, he had set himself free from them. The insanity was so homicidal that "none could pass by that way," so suicidal, or, at least, tormenting, that he was ever cutting himself with stones, howling day and night in the wildness of his paroxysms.

For a full discussion of the subject of demoniacal possession, see *Excursus* at the end of this volume.

⁽³⁾ **No man could bind him.**—The better MSS. give, "no man could any longer bind him." The attempt had been so often made and baffled that it had been given up in despair.

⁽⁴⁾ **Bound with fetters and chains.**—These were not necessarily of metal. The two processes of snapping the latter by one convulsive movement and wearing away (not "breaking") the former by friction, rather suggests the idea of ropes, or cords, as in the case of Samson (Judg. xv. 13). In Ps. cxlix. 8 the "chains" seem dis-

tinguished from the "links of iron." The vivid fulness of the whole description is eminently characteristic of St. Mark's style.

⁽⁵⁾ **Cutting himself with stones.**—This feature, again, is given only by St. Mark.

⁽⁶⁾ **He ran and worshipped him.**—The precise attitude would be that of one who not only knelt, but touched the ground with his forehead in token of his suppliant reverence.

⁽⁷⁾ **Thou Son of the most high God.**—This is the first occurrence of the name in this Gospel, and is therefore a fit place for a few words as to its history. As a divine name "the Most High God" belonged to the earliest stage of the patriarchal worship of the one Supreme Deity. Melchizedek appears as the priest of "the Most High God" (Gen. xiv. 18). It is used by Balaam as the prophet of the wider Semitic monotheism (Num. xxiv. 16), by Moses in the great Psalm of Deut. xxxii. 8. In the Prophets and the Psalms it mingles with the other names of God (Isa. xiv. 14; Lam. iii. 35; Dan. iv. 17, 24, 32, 34; vii. 18, 22, 25; Ps. vii. 17; ix. 2; xviii. 13; xlv. 4, and elsewhere). In many of these passages it will

loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee,

Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee

be seen that it was used where there was some point of contact in fact or feeling with nations which, though acknowledging one Supreme God, were not of the stock of Abraham. The old Hebrew word (*Elion* = *the Exalted*), which was used by the Phœnicians as a divine name, and appears in Plautus (*Poen.* v. i. 1) found a ready and exact equivalent in the Greek *ὑψιστος* (*hypsisistos*), which had already been used by Pindar (*Nem.* i. 90; xi. 2) with the name of Zeus. That word accordingly appeared frequently in the Greek version of the old Testament, and came into frequent use among Hellenistic or Greek-speaking Jews, occurring, *e.g.*, not less than forty times in the book Ecclesiasticus. It was one of the words which, in later as in earlier times, helped to place the Gentile and the Jew on a common ground. As such, it seems, among other uses, to have been frequently employed as a formula of exorcism; and this, perhaps, accounts for its being met with here and in Luke viii. 28, Acts xvi. 17, as coming from the lips of demoniacs. It was the name of God which had most often been sounded in their ears.

The question meets us, Was the discernment that led to the confession altogether preternatural, or had the possessed man heard of the fame of Jesus? But if he had only heard, how came he to recognise the Prophet a great way off? Was the companion whom St. Matthew alone names one who had seen and heard the prophet of Nazareth? Possibly the true explanation lies involved in the mystery of the

psychological state into which the sufferer had passed under the frightful influences that were working in him. (See Notes on chap. i. 24.)

I adjure thee.—The verb is that from which comes our word “exorcise.” The phrase is peculiar to St. Mark, and confirms the notion that the demoniac repeated language which he had often heard. He, too, seeks in some sense to “exorcise”—though it is in the language not of command, but entreaty—and falls back upon the familiar formula.

That thou torment me not.—So the abode of Dives is “a place of torment” (Luke xvi. 28), and the ministers of judgment are the “tormentors” (Matt. xviii. 34). The man identifies himself with the demons; looks forward, when the hour of judgment shall come, to condemnation; and claims, in the meantime, to be let alone. Who that has been called to minister to the souls of men in their demoniac state has not often heard language all but identical? The command given to the “unclean spirit” to “come out of the man” had, we find here and in St. Luke, been given previously, as the man drew near, and was the occasion of this frenzied cry.

At this stage, too, they both add, our Lord asked the question, “What is thy name?” The most terrible phenomenon of possession, as of many forms of insanity, was the divided consciousness which appears in this case. Now the demon speaks, and now the man. The question would recall to the man’s mind that he once had a human name, with

by God, that thou torment me not. ⁽⁸⁾ (For he said unto him, Come out of the man, *thou* unclean spirit.) ⁽⁹⁾ And he asked him,

What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many. ⁽¹⁰⁾ And he besought him much that he

all its memories of human fellowship. It was a stage, even in spite of the paroxysm that followed, in the process of recovery, in so far as it helped to disentangle him from the confusion between himself and the demons which caused his misery. At first, however, the question seems only to increase the evil, and his only answer is, "My name is Legion, for we are many." The irresistible might, the full array of the Roman legion, with its six thousand soldiers, seemed to the demoniac the one adequate symbol of the wild, uncontrollable impulses of passion and of dread that were sweeping through his soul. It would hardly have seemed possible that the force of literalism could have led any interpreter to infer the actual presence of six thousand demons, each with a personality of his own, and to calculate accordingly the number that must have entered into each of the two thousand swine: and yet this has been done.

⁽⁸⁾ **For he said unto him.**—The Greek verb is in the imperfect tense, *he was saying*, as though the demoniac had interrupted our Lord even while the words were in the act of being uttered.

Thou unclean spirit.—It is noticeable that our Lord first speaks as if the men were oppressed by a single demon only, and that it is in the answer of the man himself that we learn that their name was Legion.

⁽⁹⁾ **He besought him much that he would not send them.**—The words are singularly significant of the state of the demoniac as half-conscious of his own personal being, and half-identifying himself with the disturbing demoniac forces which were tormenting him, and yet in so doing were leading him to look on the great Healer as his tormentor. As St. Mark gives the words, they ask "that He should not send them out of the country," or district, in which they were; as in St. Luke's report, "that He would not command them to go out into the deep," i.e., not, as the English word suggests, the sea of Galilee that lay within view, but the *abyss*, the "bottomless pit" of Rev. ix. 1, 2, 11. The words of the man are as those of the demons with whom he identifies himself. He shrinks from the thought of wandering in dry places, "seeking rest and finding none" (Matt. xii. 43), or being compelled to flee, like Asmodeus, into "the utmost parts of Egypt" (Tobit viii. 3), or, worst fate of all, to be sent into the "abyss," which was the ultimate doom of evil. And so he, as identifying himself with them, suggests another alternative: "Send us into the swine that we may enter into them." If the power to terrify and disturb men is taken from us, let us, at least, they ask, retain the power to destroy brutes.

would not send them away out of the country. ⁽¹¹⁾ Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding. ⁽¹²⁾ And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter

into them. ⁽¹³⁾ And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand;)

⁽¹¹⁾ **A great herd of swine.**—We are surprised at first to find swine kept in a country where their flesh could not be an article of food. But though the Jews did not eat pork, Roman soldiers did (it was, indeed, their staple article of food), and the swine may have been kept to supply the wants of the legion with which the man was familiar. The well-known pun of Augustus in reference to Herod's murder of his children, "that it was better to be Herod's swine than his son," seems to imply that the king kept them on his estates for some such purpose.

⁽¹³⁾ **And forthwith Jesus gave them leave.**—Men have asked, sometimes in scorn, sometimes in perplexity, why the word was spoken; why permission was given for a destructive work which seemed alike needless and fruitless. The so-called rationalistic explanation, that the demoniacs drove the swine down the cliff in a last paroxysm of frenzy, is no solution of the difficulty, for, even if that hypothesis were on other grounds tenable, it is clear that our Lord's words sanctioned what they did. We are at least on the right track in suggesting that only in some such way could the man be delivered from the inextricable confusion between himself and the

delusion that he was one with "unclean spirits" by whom he had been oppressed. Not till he saw the demoniac forces that had tormented him transferred to the bodies of other creatures, and working on them the effects which they had wrought on him, could he believe in his own deliverance. Those who measure rightly the worth of a human spirit thus restored to itself, to its fellow-men, and to God, will not think that the destruction of brute life was too dear a price to pay for its restoration. Other subordinate ends—such, *e.g.*, as that it was a penalty on those who kept the unclean beasts for their violation of the Law, or that it taught men that it was through their indulgence of the swinish nature in themselves that they became subject to the darker and more demoniac passions—have been suggested with more or less plausibility.

Down a steep place.—Literally, *down the cliff*. The description exactly agrees with the east shore of the Sea of Galilee, where the cliffs, which form, as it were, the wall of the great Bashan table-lands, "rise to a height of 2,000 feet, are destitute of verdure and of foliage, and are deeply furrowed by ravines" (*Smith's Dict. of Bible*, Art. *Gennesaret*).

and were choked in the sea. ⁽¹⁴⁾ And they that fed the swine fled, and told *it* in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done. ⁽¹⁵⁾ And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid. ⁽¹⁶⁾ And they that saw *it* told them

how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil, and *also* concerning the swine. ⁽¹⁷⁾ And they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts. ⁽¹⁸⁾ And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him. ⁽¹⁹⁾ Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and

They were about two thousand.—The number, which is peculiar to St. Mark, may be noted as another instance of his graphic accuracy in detail.

⁽¹⁴⁾ **And they went out to see**—*i.e.*, the population of Gadara or Gerasa (more probably the latter), according to the reading which we adopt in verse 28. St. Mark and St. Luke both state that they found the demoniac "clothed, and in his right mind, sitting at the feet of Jesus," in the clinging gratitude of faith. The narrative of Luke viii. 27 half suggests the thought that the garment which he now wore as the outward sign of a new self-reverence had been supplied by the pity of the disciples.

⁽¹⁵⁾ **And had the legion.**—This special form of the antithesis between the man's past and present state is given by St. Mark only.

⁽¹⁷⁾ **And they began to pray him.**—It was characteristic of the wild, half-heathen population, that they were led to look on the Prophet who had wrought so great a work as a Destroyer rather than

a Saviour, and therefore shrank from His presence among them. Not so with the demoniac himself. He felt, with a faith which was real, though weak, as if he were only safe while close to his Deliverer. He followed Him to the boat, and as he was in the act of embarking, prayed that he might be with him. But this was not the discipline which was needed for his spiritual health. Retirement, renewed fellowship with his kindred in his own house, the quiet witness borne there that the Lord had had compassion on him—this was better for him than the work of a more avowed discipleship. And so he went his way "proclaiming," or "preaching," what Jesus had done for him—a true evangelist to a people whose panic terror showed that they were as yet in darkness and the shadow of death.

⁽¹⁹⁾ **The Lord hath done for thee.**—Coming from our Lord's lips, and having "God" as its equivalent in Luke viii. 39, the word "Lord" must be taken in its

tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. ⁽²⁰⁾ And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him : and all *men* did marvel.

⁽²¹⁾ And when Jesus was passed over again by ship

^a Matt.
9. 18.,

unto the other side, much people gathered unto him : and he was nigh unto the sea. ⁽²²⁾ And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue,^a Jairus by name; and when he saw him, he fell at his feet, ⁽²³⁾ and besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point

Old Testament sense, as referring, not to the Lord Jesus, but to the Father. In so speaking He was acting out what He had taught at Jerusalem, "the Son can do nothing of Himself but what He seeth the Father do" (John v. 19).

⁽²⁰⁾ **Decapolis.**—The district so named was formed by the Romans on their first conquest of Syria, B.C. 65, and, speaking roughly, included a tract of country east and south-east of the Sea of Galilee. The ten cities from which the region took its name are given by Pliny (v. 18)—though with the reservation that the list was given differently by others—as Scythopolis, Hippos, Gadara, Pella, Philadelphia, Gerasa, Dion, Canatha, Damascus, and Raphana. Of these Gadara (Matt. viii. 28; Mark v. 1; Luke viii. 26), and in some MSS. of the first-named passage, Gerasa, are the only two that occur in the Gospels. Damascus is prominent in the Acts, but the statement of Josephus (*B. J.* iii. 9, § 7), that Scythopolis was the largest of the ten towns, makes it almost certain that he did not include Damascus in the list.

⁽²²⁻²³⁾ And, behold, there

cometh one of the rulers.—In Matt. ix. 18—25, the narrative is found in a different connection as coming immediately after the feast in St. Matthew's house, which St. Mark has given in ii. 14—18, and thus once more illustrates (1) the difficulty of a systematic harmony of the events of the Galilean ministry, and (2) the entire independence of each of the Gospel records.

Jairus.—The name is given by St. Mark and St. Luke only. It was a Græcised form of the Jair of Judg. x. 3, Num. xxxii. 41. It meets us in the Apocryphal portion of Esther (xi. 2), as the name of the father of Mardocheus, or Mordecai. The fact is interesting as suggesting a coincidence between this narrative and that of the centurion's servant in Luke vii. 3. As a ruler of the synagogue, Jairus would probably have been among the elders of the Jews who came as a deputation to our Lord, and would thus have been impressed with His power to heal in cases which seemed hopeless. The coincidence is the more striking as St. Mark does not report the work of healing with which it is connected.

⁽²³⁾ Lieth at the point of

of death: *I pray thee,* come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live. ⁽²⁴⁾ And *Jesus* went with him; and much people followed him, and thronged him. ⁽²⁵⁾ And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve

years, ⁽²⁶⁾ and had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, ⁽²⁷⁾ when she had heard of *Jesus*, came in the press behind, and touched his garment. ⁽²⁸⁾ For

death.—Literally, *is at the last point; in extremis*. St. Luke adds, as one who had inquired into details, that she was the ruler's only child, was twelve years old, and that she "lay a-dying," agreeing with St. Mark's "is at the point of death," literally, *in extremis*, "at the last gasp;" and both add that the crowd that followed "thronged" and "pressed" our Lord as He went. St. Matthew goes a step further and states "is even now dead."

⁽²⁵⁾ **And a certain woman.**—The "issue of blood" was probably of the kind that brought with it ceremonial uncleanness (Lev. xv. 26), and this accounts for the sense of shame which made her shrink from applying to the Healer openly, and from confessing afterwards what she had done. It is significant that the period of her sufferings coincided with the age of the ruler's daughter. His sorrow was sudden after twelve years of joyful hope; hers had brought with it, through twelve long years, the sickness of hope deferred. St. Mark and St. Luke state (though in the latter some MSS. omit the words) that she "had spent all her substance on physicians, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse;" and the former adds

(what is, of course, obvious) that she came because she had "heard of the things concerning *Jesus*."

⁽²⁶⁾ **Was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse.**—The fact is the same as in St. Luke viii. 43, who, however, does not mention that she grew worse, but it is, as usual, expressed more graphically.

⁽²⁷⁾ **Touched his garment.**—The incidental notice is interesting as making up, together with Matt. xiv. 36, John xix. 23, all that we know as to our Lord's outward garb. There was first, nearest the body, the coat or tunic (*χιτών*) without seam, woven from the top throughout; then, over that, the garment or cloak (*ἱμάτιον*), flowing loosely after the manner of the East; and this had its "border or fringe," probably of a bright blue mingled with white, that on which the scribes and Pharisees laid stress as being in accordance with the Law (Num. xv. 38), and which they wore, therefore, of an ostentatious width (Matt. xxiii. 5). Later tradition defined the very number and arrangement of the threads or tassels of the fringe, so that they might represent the 613 precepts of the Law.

⁽²⁸⁾ **She said, If I may touch.**—The words indicate a faith real

she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole. ⁽²⁹⁾ And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in *her* body that she was healed of that plague. ⁽³⁰⁾ And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my

clothes? ⁽³¹⁾ And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? ⁽³²⁾ And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing. ⁽³³⁾ But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth. ⁽³⁴⁾ And he

but not strong. She believed, as the leper did, in the power to heal, but did not trust the love, and shrank from the thought lest the Healer should shrink from her. And she thought not of a Will that seeks to bless and save, but of a physical effluence passing from the body to the garments, and from the garments to the hand that touched them. Yet weak as the faith was, it was accepted, and outward things were endowed with a "virtue" which was not their own. So afterwards, where a like belief prevailed, the "handkerchiefs and aprons" that were brought from St. Paul's flesh became means of healing (Acts xix. 12).

⁽²⁹⁾ **She felt in her body.**—Another graphic and therefore characteristic touch, giving not only the fact, but the woman's consciousness of it. The sense of weakness and disease had passed away, and she felt the indescribable sense of health which she had not known for years.

⁽³⁰⁾ **That virtue had gone out of him.**—Literally *knowing fully in Himself the virtue that had*

gone out of Him. The word "virtue" is used in the old medical sense for the power or force which brings about a certain definite result. So men spoke of the soporific "virtue" of this or that drug. And the term is used here, not less than in Luke v. 17, with a like technical precision, for the supernatural power that, as it were, flowed out at the touch of faith, so that He who possessed was conscious of the fact of its transmission, though not, as it would seem from his question, of the occasion.

⁽³²⁾ **He looked round about.**—The tense of the Greek verb implies a continued looking.

⁽³³⁾ **The woman fearing and trembling.**—The whole description is fuller than that in St. Matthew.

⁽³⁴⁾ **Go in peace.**—The phrase has become so idiomatic that we dare not change it, but it may be well to remember that the true meaning of the Greek is "Go into peace, let that be as thy home and resting-place."

Thy faith hath made thee whole.—Literally, *thy faith hath*

said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague. ⁽³⁵⁾ While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's house certain which said, Thy daughter is dead: why

troublest thou the Master any further? ⁽³⁶⁾ As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe. ⁽³⁷⁾ And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and

saved thee. The rendering of the Authorised version is not wrong, and yet it represents but part of the full meaning of the word. Her faith had saved her, in the higher as well as in the lower sense. The teaching of the narrative lies almost on the surface. There may be imperfect knowledge, false shame, imperfect trust, and yet if the germ of faith be there, Christ, the Healer both of the souls and bodies of men, recognises even the germ, and answers the longing desire of the soul to be freed from its uncleanness. Other healers may have been sought in vain, but it finds its way through the crowd that seems to hinder its approach, and the "virtue" which it seeks goes forth even from the "hem of the garment," even through outward ordinances (for thus we interpret the miracle, which is also a parable), which in themselves have no healing power. Eusebius, in his *Church History* (vii. 13), states that the woman was a Gentile, that she belonged to Cæsarea-Philippi, and that, in thankfulness for her cure, she set up two statues in bronze—one of herself in the attitude of supplication, and the other of our Lord standing erect and stretching forth His hand to her—and that these were shown in

his own day, in the early part of the fourth century. He adds that a plant not found elsewhere grew at the foot of our Lord's statue, up to the hem of His garment, and was believed to possess a remedial "virtue" for all diseases. In the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus (c. vii) she is called Veronica, and is represented as offering her testimony to the work of healing that had been wrought in her, at our Lord's trial before the Sanhedrin. This may probably be connected with the legend that Veronica was the name of the woman who offered her handkerchief to the Lord Jesus as He was taken to the cross, and on receiving it back from Him, found that it retained the impress of the features it had touched.

⁽³⁵⁾ *Why troublest thou.*—The primary meaning of the verb is "to strip or flay," and so to vex or worry.

The Master.—Strictly, as almost always, *the Teacher*.

⁽³⁶⁾ *Be not afraid, only believe.*—The words are obviously connected with the great example of faith which had just been witnessed. If it had availed for the healing of the obstinate disease, which defied all human skill, would it not prevail also to rescue the ruler's child from the very jaws of death?

John the brother of James.

⁽³⁸⁾ And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly. ⁽³⁹⁾ And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. ⁽⁴⁰⁾ And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that

were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying. ⁽⁴¹⁾ And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise. ⁽⁴²⁾ And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment. ⁽⁴³⁾ And he charged them straitly that no man should know

⁽³⁸⁾ **Wailed greatly.**—The word used is the same as that in 1 Cor. xiii. 1, in connection with the “tinkling” (or better, *clanging*) sound of a cymbal, and, formed as it is from an interjection, *alala*, is applied to the inarticulate cries either of despair or victory. After the manner of Eastern funerals, which commonly take place on the very day of death, the parents had already called their friends and neighbours, and the hired mourners, who were “skilful in lamentation” (see Amos v. 16), and they were raising their sad monotonous wail, “Ah, my brother,” or “Ah, sister” (Jerem. xxii. 18).

⁽⁴⁰⁾ **They laughed him to scorn.**—Here again the verb implies continuous action.

⁽⁴¹⁾ **Talitha cumi.**—Here, as in the *Ephphatha* of chap. vii. 34, the Evangelist gives the very syllables which had fallen from the lips of the Healer, and been proved to be words of power. It would

probably be too wide an inference to assume from this that our Lord commonly spoke to His disciples and others in Greek, but we know that that language was then current throughout Palestine, and the stress laid on the Aramaic words in these instances, as in the *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani* on the cross, shows that they attracted a special notice. So in Acts xxii. 2, the crowd in the precincts of the Temple are expecting a speech in Greek, and are surprised at St. Paul's addressing them in Hebrew.

⁽⁴²⁾ **She was of the age of twelve years.**—St. Mark gives the age at the end of the narrative, St. Luke at the beginning, St. Matthew not at all; a proof of a certain measure of independence in dealing with the materials upon which the three narratives were severally founded.

⁽⁴³⁾ **That something should be given her to eat.**—This, again, is common to St. Mark and

it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat.

A.D. 31.
a Matt.
13. 34.

CHAPTER VI.—⁽¹⁾ And he went out from thence,^a and came into his own

St. Luke, but is not given by St. Matthew. It suggests the thought that the fuller report must have come from one who, like St. Peter, had been present in the chamber where the miracle was wrought. The command thus given is noticeable as an instance of what we may call economy in the use of supernatural power. Life is restored, but as soon as that work is done it is subject to natural laws, and requires fostering care and nourishment. The lesson may well be transferred from the life of the body to that of the spirit. There also the soul that has been raised as from the dead must have "something given it to eat," the bread of life, which strengthens and sustains it.

VI.

⁽¹⁾ And he went out from thence.—The incident here related meets us in St. Matthew (chap. xiii. 54—58) as occurring immediately after the series of parables which meet us in that chapter, and are given by St. Mark in chap. iv. 1—34; and St. Luke (chap. iv. 16—30) places a like incident as among the earliest events in our Lord's ministry. We are compelled by these facts to admit the almost entire absence of any trustworthy notes of chronological sequence, beyond the grouping, in some cases, of a few conspicuous incidents. In comparing, however, St. Matthew and St. Mark with St. Luke, there seems no sufficient ground for hastily assuming that

the first two and the third speak of the same event. The third Gospel places the visit which it narrates at the very beginning of our Lord's work, and as giving the reason of His removal to Capernaum. Here, there is no outburst of violent enmity such as we find there, but simple amazement. It seems, therefore, more probable that we have here a short account (short and imperfect, it may be, because our Lord went without His disciples) of another effort to bring the men of Nazareth to acknowledge Him, if not as the Christ, at least as a Prophet. The circumstances of the case in St. Matthew's record suggest another motive as, at least, possible. He had recently, as in Matt. xii. 48, when His mother and His brethren had come in their eager anxiety to interrupt His work, spoken in words that seem to repel them to a distance from Him. What if this visit were meant to show that, though as a Prophet He could not brook that interruption, home affections were not dead in Him, that His heart still yearned over His brethren and His townsmen, and that He sought to raise them to a higher life? On comparing the account here with that in St. Luke, it would seem almost certain that there was now a less direct assertion of His claims as the Christ than there had been before—a proclamation of the laws of the Kingdom rather than of His own position in it—a discourse like the Sermon on the Mount rather than

country; and his disciples follow him. ⁽²⁾ And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing *him* were astonished, saying, From whence hath this *man* these things? and what wisdom is this which

is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands? ⁽³⁾ Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And

an appeal to Messianic prophecy as being fulfilled in Him. And so the impression is one of wonder at His wisdom, not of anger or scorn at what He claims to be.

His disciples follow him.—St. Matthew does not name this fact. As put by St. Mark it seems to imply that the disciples did not accompany their Master, but came subsequently. They may, accordingly, have arrived subsequently to the fact which they narrate.

⁽²⁾ **Many hearing him.**—The better MSS. give, "the many," *i.e.*, the majority of those who were present.

Such mighty works.—As the Evangelist notes in verse 5 that no mighty work had been done in Nazareth, these must refer to what had been reported there, as done in Capernaum and elsewhere, His raising of Jairus's daughter (chap. v. 41) and of the nobleman's son (John iv. 46—54).

⁽³⁾ **Is not this the carpenter?**—In St. Matthew, the question appears in the form, "Is not this the carpenter's son?" It is, of course, in the nature of things probable that He, as being "subject to his parents" (Luke ii. 51), both helped in the workshop during Joseph's life, and assisted the "brethren" to carry on the work

after His death. Justin Martyr (*Dial. c. Tryph. c. 88*) relates that in his time articles said to have been made by Him, such as rakes and harrows, were in demand as relics. The apocryphal *Gospel of the Infancy*, after its manner, makes Him instruct Joseph when he was bungling at his work.

And his brethren.—See Note on chap. iii. 31. St. Mark, it should be noticed, is the only Evangelist who names the four. It is interesting to remember that in James and Judas we have probably the writers of the two Epistles that bear their names; and in Joses and Judas, possibly, the Joses or Joseph Barsabas of Acts i. 23, and the Judas Barsabas of Acts xv. 22.

Joses.—The authority of MSS. is in favour of the reading, "Joseph." It was, of course, probable that the name of the father should be borne by one of those who were in some sense his children. Joses, however, was probably but a softened form of the same name. Both forms are found in the MSS. of Acts i. 23.

They were offended at him.—The word is used in the same sense as in chap. iv. 17. They could not reconcile the new wisdom and the claim which the teaching implied with the obscurity and

they were offended at him.

⁽⁴⁾ But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour,^a but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house. ⁽⁵⁾ And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and

^a John 4. 44.

^b Matt. 9. 35; Luke 13. 22.

^c Matt. 10. 1.

healed *them*. ⁽⁶⁾ And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages,^b teaching.

⁽⁷⁾ And he called *unto him* the twelve,^c and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits;

commonness of the earlier life, and so they did not believe. (Comp. John vii. 5.)

⁽⁴⁾ **A prophet is not without honour . . .**—The words in St. Mark include “among his kindred,” which are not found in St. Matthew. The proverb seems to have been one often on our Lord’s lips, and obviously tells of a prolonged experience of indifference and unbelief in all their many forms, where he might have looked for a loyal support. In John iv. 44, it appears, in a context which presents some difficulty, as giving the reason why our Lord, on leaving Judæa, went into Galilee. It furnishes, at least, one explanation of the words “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not” (John i. 11).

⁽⁵⁾ **He could there do no mighty work.**—St. Mark’s language is stronger than St. Matthew’s, who simply states the fact that our Lord “did not many mighty works there.” The wonder-working power was not absolute and unconditioned, but depended on the faith of those who came to Him. Without that, the will and the power were alike thwarted. St. Mark adds, with more precision, that He “laid His hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them.”

The words are significant as obviously recording the impression of the disciples at the time. After such works as they had seen at Capernaum and elsewhere—the cleansing of the leper, and the raising of the dead—the healing of a few sick seemed to them but a small matter.

⁽⁶⁾ **He marvelled.**—The word is to be noted as bearing on the reality of our Lord’s human nature, and therefore on the necessary limits within which He, as being truly man, in spirit as well as body, was pleased to work. Whatever powers of prevision or insight into the hearts of men might belong to Him, they were not such as to exclude the wonder which men feel at that which comes to them unlooked for. So in Luke vii. 9 we read that He “marvelled” at the centurion’s faith.

⁽⁷⁾ **He called unto him the twelve.**—The mission of the Twelve, as afterwards of the Seventy (Luke x. 1), two and two, is recorded only by St. Mark. In so sending them, our Lord recognised the human necessity for companionship, the truth that “two are better than one” (Eccl. iv. 9), that where two are joined together with united thoughts and counsels,

(²) and commanded them that they should take nothing for *their* journey, ¹ The word signifieth a piece of brass money, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money¹ in *their* purse: (³) but *be shod* in value somewhat less than a farthing, Matt. 10. 9. but here it is taken in general for money.

each is a support and stay to the other. So Homer (*Il.* x. 224) had said, as the poet of human nature—

“So, when two work together, each for each,
Is quick to plan, and can the other teach;
But when alone one seeks the best to know,
His skill is weaker, and his thoughts are slow.”

The omission by St. Mark of the greater part of the discourse connected with the mission of the Twelve in Matt. x. is every way characteristic of the writer, whose main work it was to trace the ministry of action rather than of speech, and who gives only the essential rules of conduct which were to regulate the first mission of the Twelve. Part of the discourse is, however, given by him in chap. xiii. 9—13, as repeated in our Lord's prophecy of the tribulation that was to precede the destruction of Jerusalem.

Power over unclean spirits.

—The prominence which St. Mark gives to this special form of supernatural power, passing over its other applications in healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, raising the dead, agrees with what we have already seen in chap. i. 23, 32, 34, 39.

(³) **Save a staff only.**—St. Matthew (x. 10) gives, “neither staves”—*i.e.*, they were to take one only.

Scrip.—The practical obsolescence of the word in modern English makes it necessary to remind readers

of the New Testament that the “scrip” or wallet was a small basket carried on the back, or by a strap hanging from one shoulder, containing the food of the traveller. So David carried in his scrip the five smooth stones from the brook (1 Sam. xvii. 40). Such a basket was the necessary equipment even of the poorest traveller, yet the Apostles were to go without it. St. Mark adds, what was implied in this, “no bread.”

No money.—As the margin gives, no *brass*, or rather *bronze*, or *money*. The coins referred to are probably the “farthing” and the “mite” of Mark xii. 42.

In their purse.—Literally, as in Matt. x. 9, *in your girdle*, the twisted folds of which were, and still are, habitually used in the East instead of the “purse” of the West.

(³) **Be shod with sandals.**—The word occurs again Acts xii. 8. It describes obviously the shoes worn by the poor as distinguished from those of the more wealthy class, the sole of leather or wood fastened over the instep by strong leather thongs.

Not put on two coats.—Literally, *two tunics*—the close-fitting under-garment worn under the flowing cloak. In this, as in the other rules, we may trace the purpose that the preachers of the Gospel to the poor should come as being poor themselves, making no provision for their own comfort, no reserve for changes of raiment,

with sandals ; and not put on two coats. ⁽¹⁰⁾ And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place.

⁽¹¹⁾ And whosoever shall not receive you,^a nor hear you, when ye depart thence,

^b Acts.
13. 51.

^a Matt.
10. 14.

shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them.^b Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city. ⁽¹²⁾ And they went out, and preached that men

but should throw themselves altogether on the loving care of their Father.

Experience (and, we may add, the Spirit that teaches by experience) has led the Christian Church at large to look on these commands as binding only during the mission on which the Twelve were actually sent. It is impossible not to admire the noble enthusiasm of poverty which showed itself in the literal adoption of such rules by the followers of Francis of Assisi, and, to some extent, by those of Wiclif ; but the history of the Mendicant Orders, and other like fraternities, forms part of that teaching of history which has led men to feel that in the long run the beggar's life will bring the beggar's vices. Yet here, as in the case of the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount, the spirit is binding still, though the letter has passed away. The mission work of the Church has ever prospered in proportion as that spirit has pervaded it.

⁽¹⁰⁾ **In what place soever ye enter into an house . . .**—We have here again a safeguard against even the appearance of a selfish regard to comfort. The Apostles were to accept the first offer of hospitality, if made in faith and

love, and were not to change their place of sojourn because they were invited by a wealthier convert.

⁽¹¹⁾ **Whosoever shall not receive you.**—The better MSS. give, “whatsoever place shall not receive you.”

Shake off the dust under your feet.—The act was a familiar symbol of the sense of indignation, as in the case of St. Paul (Acts xiii. 51) at Antioch in Pisidia. The Jewish maxim, that even the very dust of a heathen land brought defilement with it, added to its significance. It was a protest in act, declaring (as our Lord declares in words) that the city or house which did not receive the messengers of the Christ was below the level of the Gentiles, even of such Gentiles as those of the cities of the Plain.

⁽¹²⁾ **And preached that men should repent.**—The work of the Apostles appears from this to have been a continuation of that of the Baptist. They announced the nearness of the kingdom of God, and repentance as the one adequate preparation for it, and baptism as the outward token of that repentance and the new life in which it was to issue (John iii. 5 ; iv. 2), but they did not as yet proclaim their Master as being Himself the Christ, and

<p>should repent. ⁽¹³⁾ And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many</p>	<p>^a Jas. 5. 14.</p> <p>^b Matt. 14. 1.</p>	<p>that were sick,^a and healed them. ⁽¹⁴⁾ And king Herod heard of him,^b (for his</p>
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therefore the head of that kingdom.

⁽¹³⁾ **Anointed with oil.**—St. Mark is the only Evangelist who mention this as the common practice of the disciples, but we learn from Jas. v. 14 that it was afterwards in use, at least, in the churches of Jerusalem and other Jewish communities. It was partly analogous to our Lord's treatment of the blind and deaf (vii. 33; viii. 23; John ix. 6), *i.e.*, it was an outward sign showing the will to heal, and therefore a help to faith; but as the use of oil was more distinctly that of an agent recognised as remedial in the popular therapeutics of the time, it had also the character of uniting (and devout minds have since so regarded it) the use of natural outward means of healing with prayer for the divine blessing. It need scarcely be said that it had not the slightest affinity with the mediæval so-called sacrament of Extreme Unction, which, though it may still retain, in theory, a partial secondary connection with the cure of the diseases of the body, is practically, as its very name implies, never administered till all hope of cure is abandoned. The development of the latter aspect of the usage was obviously the aftergrowth of a later age, when the miraculous gift of healing was withdrawn, and when it became necessary to devise a theory for the retention of the practice.

⁽¹⁴⁾ **King Herod.**—The son of Herod the Great by Malthace. Under his father's will he suc-

ceeded to the government of Galilee and Peræa, with the title of Tetrarch (for which King was used as a popular equivalent), as ruler of a fourth part of the Roman province of Syria. His first wife was a daughter of Aretas, an Arabian king or chief, named in 2 Cor. xi. 32 as king of the Damascenes. Herodias, the wife of his half-brother Philip (not the Tetrarch of Trachonitis, Luke iii. 1, but son of Herod the Great by Mariamne, and though wealthy, holding no official position as a ruler), was daughter of Aristobulus, the son whom Herod put to death, and was therefore niece to both her husbands. Prompted partly by passion, partly by ambition, she left Philip, and became the wife of Antipas (Jos. *Ant.* xviii. 5, § 4). The marriage, at once adulterous and by the Mosaic law doubly incestuous, shocked the conscience of all the stricter Jews. It involved Antipas in a war with the father of the wife whom he had divorced and dismissed, and it was probably in connection with this war that we read of soldiers on actual duty as coming under the teaching of the Baptist in Luke iii. 14. The prophetic spirit of the Baptist, the very spirit of Elijah in his dealings with Ahab and Jezebel, made him the spokesman of the general feeling, and so brought him within the range of the vindictive bitterness of the guilty queen.

Heard of him.—The words do not necessarily imply that no tidings had reached him till now. Our Lord's ministry, however, had

name was spread abroad :) |
and he said, That John the

Baptist was risen from the
dead, and therefore mighty

been at this time at the furthest not longer than a year, and possibly less, and Antipas, residing at Tiberias and surrounded by courtiers, might well be slow to hear of the works and teaching of the Prophet of Nazareth. Possibly, the "nobleman" (strictly, *one of the king's household*) of Capernaum (John iv. 46), or Manaen, the foster-brother of the tetrarch (Acts xiii. 1), or Chuza his steward (Luke viii. 3), may have been among his first informants, as "the servants" of whom St. Matthew speaks (xiv. 2) (the word is not that used for "slaves") to whom he now communicated his theory as to the reported wonders.

That John the Baptist was risen from the dead . . . In Matt. xvi. 14, Luke ix. 7—9, this is given as one of the three opinions that were floating among the people as to our Lord's character, the other two being (1) that He was Elijah, and (2) that He was one of the old prophets who had risen again. The policy of the tetrarch connected him with the Sadducean priestly party rather than with the more popular and rigid Pharisees, and a comparison of Matt. xvi. 6 with Mark viii. 15 at least suggests the identity of the "leaven of Herod" with that of the Sadducees. On this supposition, his acceptance of the first of the three rumours is every way remarkable. The superstitious terror of a conscience stained with guilt is stronger than his scepticism as a Sadducee, even though there mingled with it, as was probable enough, the wider unbelief of Roman Epicureanism. To him the

new prophet, working signs and wonders, which John had never worked, was but the re-appearance of the man whom he had murdered. It was more than a spectre from the unseen world, more than the metempsychosis of the soul of John into another body. It was nothing less than John himself. An interesting illustration of what is stated as to Herod's belief may be given from the Roman poet Persius. He is describing in one of his satires (V. 180—188) the effect of superstitious fear in marring all the pleasures of the pride of luxurious pomp, and this is the illustration which he chooses:—

"But when the feast of Herod's birthday comes,
And, through the window, smoke-besmeared, the lamps,
Set in due order, wreaths of violets round,
Pour out their oily fumes, and in the dish
Of red-clay porcelain tail of tunny swims,
And the white flagon bellies out with wine,
Thou mov'st thy lips, yet speak'st not,
and in fear
Thou keep'st the Sabbath of the circumcised,
And then there rise dark spectres of the dead,
And the cracked egg-shell bodes of coming ill."

It is clear that a description so minute in its details must have been photographed, as it were, from some actual incident, and could not have been merely a general picture of the prevalence of Jewish superstition in Roman society. Commentators on the Roman poet have, however, failed to find any clue to the incident

works do shew forth themselves in him. ⁽¹⁵⁾ Others said, That it is Elias. And others said, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets. ⁽¹⁶⁾ But when Herod heard *thereof*,^a he said, It is John whom I

A.D. 30.

^a Luke 3. 19.

beheaded: he is risen from the dead. ⁽¹⁷⁾ For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife: for he had married her. ⁽¹⁸⁾ For John

thus graphically related. Can we, starting from what the Gospel tells us as to the character of Antipas, picture to ourselves a scene that explains his strange mysterious hints? In A.D. 39 Herod Agrippa I., the nephew of the Tetrarch, obtained the title of king from the Emperor Caligula. Prompted by the ambition of Herodias, Antipas went with her to Rome, to seek, by lavish gifts and show of state, the same distinction. The emissaries of Agrippa, however, thwarted his schemes, and he was deposed and sent into exile at Lugdunum. May we not conjecture that the same superstitious terror which made him say that John the Baptist was risen from the dead followed him there also? "Herod's birthday" again comes round, and there is a great feast in his house at Rome, and instead of the "lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee," senators and courtiers and philosophers are there, and, lo! there is a pause, and the Tetrarch rises in silent horror, as Macbeth at the apparition of Banquo's ghost—the tunny in the porcelain dish reminds him of the "head in the charger"—and he sees the dark form shaking its gory locks, and his lips move in speechless terror, and he "does many things" on the coming Sabbath, and the thing

becomes a by-word and a proverb in the upper circles of Roman society, and is noted in the schools of the Stoics as an illustration of what superstition can effect. The view thus stated is, of course, not more than a conjecture, but it at least explains phenomena. Persius died, at the age of twenty-eight or thirty, in A.D. 62, and may well therefore have heard the matter talked of in his boyhood.

⁽¹⁵⁾ **As one of the prophets.**—In Matt. xvi. 14 we have the more definite conjecture identifying our Lord with Jeremiah. A theory of transmigration seems to have developed itself in the system of the Pharisees, as a sequel to their belief in the immortality of the soul (Jos. Wars, ii. 8, § 14), and is implied in the question of the disciples in John ix. 2, and the words of the author of the Book of Wisdom (Wisdom viii. 20).

⁽¹⁶⁾ **It is John whom I beheaded.**—The repetition of the assertion, and the tense of the verb, seem to imply that this was the tetrarch's answer to all such conjectures.

⁽¹⁷⁾ **Bound him in prison.**—Josephus (*Ant.* xviii. 5, § 2) gives Machærus, in Peræa, as the scene of the imprisonment and death of the Baptist.

⁽¹⁸⁾ **For John had said unto**

had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife."

(19) Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him,¹ and would have killed him; but she could not: (20) for Herod feared John, knowing that

² Lev. 18. 16.

¹ Or, an inward grudge.

A.D. 32.

² Or, kept him, or, saved him.

he was a just man and an holy, and observed him;² and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly. (21) And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birthday made a supper to his

Herod.—The Jewish historian (*Ant.* xviii. 5, § 2) states more generally that Antipas was afraid lest some popular outbreak should be the result of the preaching of the Baptist, working on the excitable peasantry of Galilee.

(19) **Herodias had a quarrel.**—Better, as in the margin, *had a grudge, or spite, against him.*

(20) **For Herod feared John.**—The full description of Herod's feelings towards the Baptist is peculiar to St. Mark, and his whole narrative of the imprisonment more complete than that in Matt. xiv. 3—5, or Luke iii. 19, 20, or John iv. 12.

A just man and an holy.—The two words indicate—the first, righteousness as seen in relation to man; the second, the same element of character in relation to God.

Observed him.—The word has been differently interpreted, but Luke ii. 19, where it is translated "kept," seems decisive as to its meaning—not that Herod kept him in close custody, but that he had a certain reverence for his prisoner. In English, however, to "keep" a man is ambiguous, and the "observed" of our version seems on the whole preferable to any other. *Preserved* or *protected* would perhaps be better still. The earlier versions, Tyndale, Cranmer,

and the Geneva, have "gave him reverence."

He did many things.—Some of the better MSS., including the Vatican and the Sinaitic, give "he was much perplexed."

(21) **And when a convenient day was come . . .**—Some critics have looked on the feast, which St. Matthew describes as Herod's birthday, as one commemorating Herod's accession—his birthday as a ruler; but there seems no reason for not accepting the word in its simple natural sense. Such feasts were common enough in the imperial life at Rome, and that of Herod's birthday had become proverbial even there (Persius, *Sat.* v., l. 180, as in Note on verse 14). In classical Greek, as in Herod. iv. 26, the word was used of a feast commemorating the birthday of the dead.

His lords, high captains, and chief estates.—St. Mark alone gives the account of the guests. The three words mean respectively (1) the *magnates*, or officials of the court; (2) the *chiliarchs*, or chief captains (literally, *captain of a thousand*—the same word as in Acts xxi. 31, xxvi. 26) of the Roman legion; (3) the *chief men* ("estates," though found in nearly all the English versions, is to modern ears too formal a word),

lords, high captains, and chief *estates* of Galilee; ⁽²²⁾ and when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt,

and I will give *it* thee. ⁽²³⁾ And he sware unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give *it* thee, unto the half of my kingdom. ⁽²⁴⁾ And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of

probably the large landowners of the province. The presence of the chiliarchs was in itself probably an offence to the stricter Jews, who held that it was unlawful even to eat with a Gentile (Acts x. 28). Herod's life at Rome, however, had freed him from such scruples.

⁽²²⁾ The daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced.—Dances, in filmy garments that but half concealed the form, commonly of an impure or voluptuous nature, were common enough both at Eastern and Roman banquets, the guests being simply spectators. But the dancers were for the most part women who made it their calling, like the nautch-girls of India; and it was a new thing, at which every decent Jew would shudder, for the daughter of a kingly house to come thus into a shameless publicity and expose herself to the gaze of the banqueters, including as they did the chief captains and chiliarchs of the Roman legions, as well as Herod's own courtiers and the chief men of the province. The Greek (literally, *Herodias's own daughter*) lays stress on this exceptional degradation. But Herodias, it would seem, knew the tetrarch's weak point as well as Madame du Barry knew that of Louis XV. of France, and sought

to bend him to her will, even though it were by the sacrifice of her daughter's modesty. She danced before them—literally, *in the midst of them*—as they reclined on their couches indolently gazing. The officers of the Roman legion found that Herod could rival even in this respect, the lascivious banquets of Tiberius (Suet. *Tib.* c. 42), and were gratified accordingly. Her name is given by Josephus (*Ant.* xviii. 5, § 4) as Salome.

⁽²³⁾ He sware unto her.—The scandalous chronicles of the time were not without stories of extravagant rewards paid to mimes and dancers, and Herod might fancy that in this also he was reproducing the magnificence of the imperial court at Rome, or that of the Persian despot Ahasuerus (*Esth.* v. 3, 6). But he probably hardly expected "the half of his kingdom" as the "whatsoever thou shalt ask." A jewel, a bracelet, a palace, or the taxes of one or more cities (the gift bestowed by Antiochus on his concubine, 2 Macc. iv. 30), were probably in his thoughts as what she was likely to ask and he would gladly give.

⁽²⁴⁾ She went forth, and said unto her mother.—This feature in the narrative is peculiar to St. Mark, and may be taken as show-

John the Baptist. ⁽²⁵⁾ And she came in straightway with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist. ⁽²⁶⁾ And

¹ Or, *one of his guard.*

the king was exceeding sorry; *yet* for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him, he would not reject her. ⁽²⁷⁾ And immediately the king sent an executioner,¹

ing that the girl was not previously a party to the plot; possibly even that Herodias herself was rather tempted by an unlooked-for opportunity than carrying out a deliberately planned scheme. St. Matthew's words "being before instructed" does not necessarily imply more than that her mother prompted her answer in the interval during which she went to consult her. The mother's absence shows that the supper was one for men only, and that it was among them, flushed as they were with wine, that the daughter had appeared in reckless disregard of all maiden modesty.

⁽²⁵⁾ **By and by.**—We hardly recognise in this word, so much has its meaning been altered, St. Mark's familiar "forthwith" or "immediately." At the period when our version was made it was, however (as we find in Shakespeare,

"We crave your hearing patiently,
And we'll be with you *by-and-by*"),

in common use as an equivalent. (Comp. Matt. xiii. 21.)

In a charger.—The word, now practically obsolete, is found also in Matt. xiv. 8 and Num. vii. 13. It was defined in old dictionaries as "a great platter wherein meat was carried."

⁽²⁶⁾ **And the king was exceeding sorry.**—It was the last

struggle of conscience. In that moment there must have come before his mind his past reverence for the prophet, the joy which had for a time accompanied the strivings of a better life, possibly the counsels of his foster-brother Manaen (Acts xiii. 1). Had there been only the personal influence of Herodias these might have prevailed against it, but, like most weak men, Herod feared to be thought weak. It was not so much his regard for the oath which he had taken (that, had it been taken in secret, he might have got over), but his shrinking from the taunt, or whispered jest, or contemptuous gesture of the assembled guests, if they should see him draw back from his plighted word. A false regard for public opinion, for what people will say or think of us in our own narrow circle, was in this, as in so many other instances, an incentive to guilt instead of a restraint. From the standpoint of a true morality the oath was obviously *ab initio* wrong, and therefore not binding.

⁽²⁷⁾ **Sent an executioner.**—St. Mark uses a Latin word, *speculator*, a word which, originally meaning "watchman" or "sentinel," had come to be applied by Latin writers of the time specifically to soldiers employed, as in this instance, as couriers or scouts (Suet. *Caligula*,

and commanded his head
to be brought : and he went
and beheaded him in the

prison, ⁽²⁸⁾ and brought his
head in a charger, and
gave it to the damsel : and

c. 44; Tacit. *Hist.* xi. 73). The earlier English versions, Tyndale, Cranmer, Geneva, give "hang-man." Measured by the standard of earthly greatness, it seems almost like a paradox to say of one who had only been for a few short months a preacher of righteousness in the wilderness of Judæa, as men have said of the kings and conquerors of the world, "So passed from the earth one of the greatest of her sons;" and yet this, and nothing less than this, if we accept our Lord's words (Matt. xi. 11), must be our estimate of the Baptist's character. Intensity of purpose, dauntless courage, profound humility, self-denial carried to its highest point (John iii. 29, 30), a burning love that passed beyond the limits of race and nation (Matt. iii. 9), tenderness of sympathy for the toilers of the world (Luke iii. 11—14), for the fallen and the outcast (Matt. xxi. 32)—all these were there; and what elements of moral greatness can go beyond them? And the consciousness of Christendom has recognised that greatness. Art and poetry have symbolised it in outward form, and the work of the Forerunner, the conviction that the preaching of repentance must precede that of forgiveness, has been reproduced in every great revival of religious life which has brought the Kingdom of Heaven nearer to men's hearts and hopes.

⁽²⁸⁾ The damsel gave it to her mother.—This, it will be

remembered, was an essential part of the demand. Herodias was resolved not to be cheated with the statement that John had been executed, or the substitution of the head of some obscure prisoner. She must see the head, and, like Fulvia with the head of Cicero, glut her revenge by gazing on the pale lips of the prophet that had reproved her. A glance at the after-history of those who were accomplices in the deed of blood will not be out of place. Shortly after the new society, for which John had prepared the way, had started upon its great career, when her brother, the young Agrippa, had obtained the title of king, through the favour of Caligula, Herodias, consistent in her ambition, stirred up her husband to seek the same honour. With this view she accompanied him to Rome; but they were followed by complaints from the oppressed Galileans, and the result was that he was deposed from his tetrarchy, and banished to Lugdunum (the modern Lyons) in Gaul. Thither she accompanied him, faithful to his fallen fortunes, in spite of overtures from her brother to return to Judæa, and there they died (Jos. *Ant.* xviii. 7, § 2). A tradition or legend relates that Salome's death was retributive in its outward form. She fell upon the ice, and in the fall her head was severed from the body. Josephus, however, simply records the fact that she married first her great-uncle Philip, the Tetrarch of Trachonitis, and afterwards her

the damsel gave it to her mother. ⁽²⁹⁾ And when his disciples heard of it, they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb. ⁽³⁰⁾ And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus,^a and

^a Luke
9. 10.

told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. ⁽³¹⁾ And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile: for there were many coming and going,

first cousin, Aristobulus (*Ant.* xviii. 5, § 4).

⁽²⁹⁾ **And when his disciples heard of it.**—Among those who thus transferred their allegiance to their true Lord were, we must believe, the two whom John had sent to Him from his prison (*Matt.* xi. 1). From this time they probably ceased in Judæa to be a distinct community, though, as the instances of Apollos (*Acts* xviii. 25) and the disciples at Ephesus (*Acts* xix. 3) show, they still maintained a separate existence in the more distant regions to which the influence of the Baptist had indirectly penetrated. The burial of the prophet probably took place at Machærus, the scene of his execution, but no tradition or legend has identified his sepulchre.

⁽³⁰⁾ **And the apostles gathered themselves together.** The return of the Twelve from their first mission is mentioned by St. Luke (*ix.* 10), but not by St. Matthew in this connection. During their absence our Lord may either have been preaching the gospel of the kingdom elsewhere, or have remained at Capernaum.

The twofold report, "What they had done and what they had taught," implies acts of miraculous healing, and discourses addressed

to the people. They were in full training for their future work.

⁽³¹⁾ **Come ye yourselves apart.**—Peculiar to St. Mark are (1) the tender consideration of the invitation to "rest awhile," and (2) the description of the throng of people as "coming and going." We may, I think, reverently trace as the motives of this withdrawal, (1) the strong personal emotion which the death of one whom Jesus had known and loved could not fail to cause, and (2) the wish to avoid being the centre of the popular excitement which the death of John was likely to cause, and which we know, as a matter of fact (*Jos. Ant.* xviii. 5, § 2), was so strong that men looked on all the subsequent troubles of Antipas and his wife as a retributive judgment for it. This was, indeed, sufficiently shown by the eagerness with which the people followed Him into His retirement, and their wish a little later to depose the tetrarch and to make Him their king (*John* vi. 15). Two other circumstances, named by the other Evangelists, tended to increase the crowd that thronged around Him. (1) The Twelve, as St. Mark and St. Luke (*ix.* 10) both tell us, had just returned from their missionary circuit, and it was, indeed, partly to give them, too, an interval of repose,

and they had no leisure so much as to eat. ⁽³²⁾ And they departed into a desert place by ship privately.^a

⁽³³⁾ And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him.

^b Matt. 9.
36.
^a Matt.
14. 13

^c Matt.
14. 15.

⁽³⁴⁾ And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people,^b and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.

⁽³⁵⁾ And when the day was now far spent,^c his disciples

that he thus withdrew from His public work; and (2) the Pass-over was coming on (John vi. 4), and all the roads of Galilee were thronged with companies of pilgrims hastening to keep the feast at Jerusalem.

⁽³²⁾ Into a desert place.—St. Luke (ix. 10) names this as a “city called Bethsaida,” *i.e.*, one of the two towns bearing that name on the coast of the Sea of Galilee. The name (which signified House of Fish = Fish-town) was a natural one for villages so placed, and the topography of all countries, our own included, presents too many instances of two or more places bearing the same name, with some distinctive epithet, to make the fact at all strange here. In St. Mark’s account the disciples sail, after the feeding of the Five Thousand, to the other Bethsaida (chap. vi. 45), the Bethsaida of Galilee (John xii. 21), and as this appears in John vi. 17 to have been in the direction of Capernaum, the scene of the miracle must have been Bethsaida-Julias, on the north-east shore of the lake, in the region known as Gaulonitis.

⁽³³⁾ And ran afoot.—The words are used to point out the contrast between the disciples, who had come

in their boat, and the crowds who came, from all the cities on the shore of the lake, by land.

⁽³⁴⁾ And Jesus, when he came out.—The words imply that our Lord, from the height to which He had withdrawn, saw the crowds drawing near, and then, instead of retiring still further, went forward, moved by the touch of pity which the sight of an eager and suffering multitude never failed to rouse in Him (Matt. ix. 36), to meet them and relieve their sufferings. St. Mark points out that the source of His compassion was (as we are also told in Matt. ix. 36) that they were “as sheep having no shepherd.” They had no true teacher, no righteous king, to guide them. Such were the sheep whom He had come to save.

⁽³⁵⁾ And when the day was now far spent.—The narrative that follows is, in many ways, one of the most important in the Gospel narratives. (1) It is the only miracle recorded by all the four Evangelists, and thus is practically one of the chief *data* for interweaving the supplemental narrative of St. John with that of the other three. (2) It was the fullest manifestation of the sovereignty of the Son of Man over the world of

came unto him, and said, |

| This is a desert place, and

nature. The act was distinctly, if we accept the facts of the case, one of creative power, and does not admit, as some of the works of healing might seem to do, of being explained away as in part the result of strong faith or excited imagination on the part of those who were its objects. The only rationalising explanation which has ever been offered—viz., that our Lord by His example, in offering the five loaves and the two fishes for the use of others than His own company of the Twelve, stirred the multitude to bring out the little store which, till then, each man in his selfish anxiety had kept concealed—is ludicrously inadequate. It is simply inconceivable that this is what the disciples and the multitude believed they witnessed, and what the Evangelists meant to record. The narrative must be accepted or rejected as a whole; and if accepted it is, as we have said, a proof of supernatural, if not absolutely of divine power. (3) No narrative of any other miracle offers so many marks of naturalness, both in the vividness of colouring with which it is told, and the coincidences, manifestly without design, which it presents to us. It is hardly possible to imagine four independent writers—independent, even if two of them (as, e.g., St. Matthew and St. Mark) were derived from a common source—reproducing, in this way, a mere legend. (4) The nature of this evidence will be seen in all its strength by combining the facts of the four records as we proceed. (5) The miracle was important, as we see from John vi., on account of its dogmatic symbolism. It became

the text of the dialogue at Capernaum in which (not to anticipate what belongs to the fourth Gospel) communion with the life of Christ was shadowed forth under the figure of eating the flesh of Him who is the true Bread from heaven.

(35) **His disciples came unto him.**—In St. John's narrative, Philip and Andrew are prominent as speakers, and our Lord puts to the former the question, "Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?" As Philip and Andrew both belonged to the Bethsaida on the western shore, and knew the whole region well, their local knowledge may have made the question natural. It was apparently after this private conversation that the main body of the disciples came to their Master beseeching Him to dismiss the multitude that they might buy food in the nearest villages. They were met by what must have seemed to them the marvellous calmness of the answer: "They need not depart, give ye them to eat." Philip's rough estimate (John vi. 7) having been passed on to the others, they answer that it would take two hundred pennyworth of bread (more accurately, of loaves) (the Roman penny, or *denarius*, as a coin, was worth $7\frac{1}{2}d.$ of our money, but its value is better measured by its being the average day's wages of a soldier or labourer, Matt. xx. 2) to feed so great a number. Then Jesus asks them, "How many loaves have ye?" and Andrew (John vi. 8), as the spokesman of the others, replies that they have found a lad with five loaves (*barley loaves*, in St

now the time is far passed :
 (36) send them away, that
 they may go into the coun-
 try round about, and into
 the villages, and buy them-
 selves bread : for they have
 nothing to eat. (37) He an-
 swered and said unto them,
 Give ye them to eat. And
 they say unto him, Shall
 we go and buy two hundred
 pennyworth¹ of bread, and
 give them to eat? (38) He
 saith unto them, How
 many loaves have ye? go
 and see. And when they

¹ The
 Roman
 penny
 is
 seven-
 pence
 half-
 penny;
 as Matt.
 18. 28.

knew, they say, Five, and
 two fishes. (39) And he
 commanded them to make
 all sit down by companies
 upon the green grass.
 (40) And they sat down in
 ranks, by hundreds, and by
 fifties. (41) And when he
 had taken the five loaves
 and the two fishes, he
 looked up to heaven, and
 blessed, and brake the
 loaves, and gave *them* to
 his disciples to set before
 them; and the two fishes
 divided he among them all.

John, the food of the poor) and
 two fishes.

This is a desert place.—The
 word “desert” (as the “green
 grass” of verse 39 shows) does
 not mean more than a wild, open
 country, far from the villages and
 cities where shops might have been
 found and food bought.

**Now the time is far
 passed.**—The Greek word is the
 same as the “far spent” of the
 previous clause.

(36) **Into the country.**—More
 literally, *the farms*, the enclosed
 cultivated land and the buildings
 belonging to it.

(39) **He commanded them to
 make all sit down.**—This, too,
 was done with a calm and orderly
 precision. They were to sit down
 in companies of fifty or a hundred
 each, probably arranged after the
 order of a Roman *triclinium*, and
 thus the number of those who were
 fed became a matter of easy cal-
 culation.

By companies.—The Greek
 expresses the distributive force
 of the English by simple re-
 petition, “companies *and* com-
 panies.” The “green grass” may
 be noted as an example of St.
 Mark’s vividness, and serves as an
 indirect note of time pointing to
 the same season as that specified
 by St. John, *sc.*, a little before the
 Passover. (Comp. John vi. 10.)

(40) **In ranks.**—The primary
 meaning of the Greek word is “a
 bed of flowers or herbs,” and it
 comes in here effectively, with the
 same distributive reduplication as
 in the last verse, to paint the whole
 scene to the mind’s eye. The
 bright colours of Eastern dress
 probably made the resemblance
 more striking than it would be
 with a like multitude so arranged
 among ourselves.

(41) **He looked up to heaven,
 and blessed, and brake.**—The
 act was natural and simple enough,
 the “saying grace” (St. John uses

(42) And they did all eat, and were filled. (43) And they took up twelve bas-

kets full of the fragments, and of the fishes. (44) And they that did eat of the

the word, "giving thanks") of the head of a Jewish household as he gathered his family around him. The formulæ in such cases were commonly short and simple, like our own, such, *e.g.*, as, "May God, the ever-blessed One, bless what He has given us," as in the common College Grace, "*Benedictus benedicat.*" Looking, however, to the teaching which followed the miracle, as in John vi., and to our Lord's subsequent use at the Last Supper of the same words and acts, with others which gave them a new and higher meaning, we can hardly be wrong in thinking that as He now distributed the earthly bread to the hungering crowd, through the agency of His Apostles, there was present to His mind the thought that hereafter He would, through the same instrumentality, impart to souls that hungered after righteousness the gift of communion with Himself, that thus they might feed on the true Bread that cometh down from heaven. This thought may well have mirrored itself in the upward look as of one rapt in prayer, which impressed itself on the memory of the disciples.

It lies in the nature of the case, as a miracle of the highest order, that the process of multiplication is inconceivable in its details. Did each loaf, in succession, supply a thousand with food, and then come to an end, its place taken by another? Was the structure of the fishes, bone and skin and head, reproduced in each portion that

was given to the guests at that great feast? We know not, and the Evangelists did not care to ask or to record. It was enough for them that the multitude "did all eat, and were filled."

(43) **Twelve baskets full.**—The basket here is the *cophinus*, a small basket carried in the hand, and often used by travellers to hold their food. So Juvenal (*Sat.* iii. 14) describes the Jews of Italy as travelling with "their *cophinus* and a wisp of hay," by way of pillow, as their only luggage. St. John records that the gathering was made by our Lord's express commands, "that nothing be lost." The marvellous display of creative power, as in the case of the daughter of Jairus (*chap.* v. 43), was not to supersede forethought, thrift, economy in the use of the gifts it had bestowed. It is probable, from the language of the disciples in verse 37, and from John xiii. 29, that they were in the habit of distributing food to the poor in the villages and towns in which they preached, and the fragments were, we may believe, reserved for that use, or, it may be, for the meals of the disciples themselves.

(44) **Five thousand men.**—St. Mark uses the word which excludes women and children. St. Matthew is the only Evangelist who mentions their presence; but all the four use the word which emphasises the fact that all the five thousand were *men*. As the crowd had come in many cases from considerable

loaves were about five thousand men. ⁽⁴⁵⁾ And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida,¹ while he sent away the people. ⁽⁴⁶⁾ And when he had sent them away, he

^a Matt.
14. 23.

¹ Or,
over
against
Beth-
saida.

departed into a mountain to pray. ⁽⁴⁷⁾ And when even was come," the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land. ⁽⁴⁸⁾ And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the

distances, the women and children were probably few in number, were grouped together by themselves, and were not counted, so that the round number dwelt in men's minds without reference to them.

⁽⁴⁵⁾ **Straightway he constrained his disciples.**—St. John narrates more fully the impression made by the miracle. It led those who witnessed it to the conclusion that "this was the prophet that should come into the world." Their impatience of the tetrarch's rule had probably been increased by the recent murder of the prophet whom they had honoured, and they sought to seize Him and make Him a king against His will (John vi. 14, 15), and He, shrinking from that form of sovereignty, withdrew from His disciples, dismissed the multitude, and on the mountain height passed the night in prayer. The disciples at His bidding were crossing to the other side to Bethsaida—i.e., to the town of that name on the western shore of the lake near Capernaum (John vi. 17). It was, we may reverently say, as if in this unwonted stir of popular excitement—not against Him, but in His favour—this nearness to a path of earthly greatness, instead of that which led onward to the cross, He

saw something like a renewal of the temptation in the wilderness, needing special communion with His Father that He might once again resist and overcome it. And once again, therefore, He desired to pass through the conflict alone, as afterwards in Gethsemane, with no human eye to witness the temptation or the victory. The "constraint" which He had to exercise on the disciples implies that they too shared in the excitement and wishes of the multitude.

Unto Bethsaida.—There is nothing in the text to warrant the marginal reading, "over against Bethsaida." It was probably suggested by some one who did not know that there were two Bethsaidas, in order to avoid the seeming difficulty which presented itself from the statement in St. Luke, that the five thousand were fed at or near Bethsaida.

⁽⁴⁶⁾ **When he had sent them away.**—More accurately, *When he had taken leave of them*, or *bidden farewell*, as in Luke ix. 61; Acts xviii. 18—21; 2 Cor. ii. 13. The word implies a friendly parting salutation.

⁽⁴⁸⁾ **About the fourth watch of the night.**—The Jews, since their conquest by Pompeius, had adopted the Roman division of the

fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them.

(49) But when they saw him walking upon the sea,

they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out: (50) for they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them,

night into four watches, and this was accordingly between 3 A.M. and 6 A.M., in the dimness of the early dawn. As the Passover was nigh at hand, the disciples had the benefit of the light of the full moon (John vi. 4). St. John adds (vi. 19), as if from a personal reminiscence, and as guarding against rationalising explanations that would minimise the miracle (such as that our Lord was seen on the shore, or was swimming to the boat), that they were about twenty-five or thirty furlongs from the point from which they had started—i.e., as the lake was five miles wide, nearly three-fourths of the way across.

(49) **Walking upon the sea.**—Here, again, we have to choose between the simple acceptance of the supernatural fact as another instance of our Lord's sovereignty over nature, or rejecting it as a legend. On the former supposition, we may see in it something like an anticipation (not unconnected, it may be, with the intensity of that crisis in His life) of that spiritual body of which we see another manifestation in the Transfiguration, and which became normal after the Resurrection (John xx. 19, 26), reaching its completeness in the wonder of the Ascension. We speculate almost involuntarily on the nature, and, as it were, process of the miracle, asking whether the ordinary laws

that govern motion were broken, or suspended, or counteracted by higher laws. No such questions would seem to have suggested themselves to the disciples. They, as yet not free from the popular superstitions of their countrymen, thought that it was "a spirit" (better, a *phantom*, or *spectre*) taking the familiar form, it might be, to lure them to their destruction, or as a token that some sudden mischance had deprived them altogether of that loved Presence, and that they were looking on the spectre of one who was no longer among the living; and, therefore, in their vague terror, they were troubled, and cried out for fear.

And would have passed by them.—The words obviously record the impression made on the disciples at the time. They thought in their terror that He did not recognise them as they recognised Him, and so—and this we may believe to have been what He had in view—they cried out to Him as with the prayer of a faith that mingled with their terror.

(50) **Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid.**—The accuracy with which the words are given by St. John, as well as by St. Matthew and St. Mark, shows the impression which the incident made on the minds of the disciples. To hear the familiar tones and the cheering words was enough, even amid

Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid. ⁽⁵¹⁾ And he went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves

a Mtt.
14. 34.

beyond measure, and wondered. ⁽⁵²⁾ For they considered not *the miracle* of the loaves: for their heart was hardened. ⁽⁵³⁾ And when they had passed over, a

the howling of the winds and the dashing of the waves, to give them confidence and hope. We can scarcely doubt that in after-years that moment came back to their recollection, invested for them, as it has since been for the Church at large, with something of a symbolic character. Often the sky became dark, and the waves of the troublesome world were rough, and the wind was contrary, and the blasts of persecution beat on them, and the ark of Christ's Church was tossed on the waters, and they were wearied and spent with rowing. They thought themselves abandoned, and then in the dim twilight they would see or feel once again the tokens of His presence. He was coming to them through the storm. "Be of good cheer" became the watchword of their lives.

⁽⁵¹⁾ **The wind ceased . . .**—St. Mark adds to what we find in St. Matthew and St. John that "they were above measure astonished" at the sudden lull. The words "and wondered" are omitted in many of the best MSS. (Comp. chap. iv. 39.) For the most part these mountain squalls died away gradually, and left the waves rough. Here the wind ceased in a moment, and ceased as their Lord entered the boat. And he gives a significant reason for their astonishment, "For they reflected not on the loaves, for their heart was

hardened." This was the later analysis which the disciples made of their feelings on that night. Had they understood all the divine creative energy which the miracle of the loaves involved, nothing afterwards, not even the walking on the waves, or the lulling of the storm, would have seemed startling to them. The words connect themselves with the later question (chap. viii. 17), "Have ye your heart yet hardened?"

⁽⁵²⁾ **For they considered not . . .**—This is peculiar to St. Mark, and may fairly be received as representing St. Peter's recollection of what had been the mental state of the disciples at the time. They had not drawn from the miracle of the Loaves the conclusion which they might have drawn, that all natural forces were subject to their Master's sovereignty. The personal connection of the Evangelist with the Apostle may, perhaps, also account for his omission of the narrative which St. Matthew gives of his rashness and failing faith (Matt. xiv. 28—33).

⁽⁵³⁾ **And when they had passed over, they came into the land of Gennesaret.**—The name, possibly a corruption of the older Chinneroth (Num. xxxiv. 11; Josh. xi. 2; xii. 3), belonged to the western shore of the lake to which it gave one of its titles, and included Capernaum, to which, as we learn from John vi. 17, 24, the disciples

they came into the land of Gennesaret, and drew to the shore. ⁽⁵⁴⁾ And when they were come out of the ship, straightway they knew him, ⁽⁵⁵⁾ and ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard he was. ⁽⁵⁶⁾ And whithersoever he entered, into

¹ Or, *if*.

A.D. 32.

^a Matt. 15. 1.

villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched him¹ were made whole.

CHAPTER VII.—

⁽¹⁾ Then came together unto him the Pharisees,^a and cer-

were steering. The region was one of singular fertility (Jos. Wars, iii. 10, § 8) (the name has been explained as meaning the "Garden of Sharon," a place between Tabor and the lake, the word itself meaning, as in the Sharon of the Old Testament, a fair and fertile plain), and was then one of the most populous districts of Palestine.

⁽⁵⁴⁾ We have to remember, though not in this place to discuss, the fact that it was here, in the synagogue of Capernaum, that our Lord, meeting with those who had seen the miracle of the loaves, led them into that higher region of spiritual truth which the discourse of John vi. 22—65 brings before us. The manifestation of divine power in the works of healing coincided with the divine wisdom revealed in the new teaching.

⁽⁵⁵⁾ **To carry about in beds.**—The word for "beds," as in chap. ii. 4, described the portable couches used chiefly by the poor.

⁽⁵⁶⁾ **Or country.**—Better, as before in verse 36, *farms or hamlets*. The three words form almost an exhaustive list of the various grades of aggregate human habitations.

In the streets.—Better, *in the market-places*; literally, *the broad ways*.

The border of his garment.—Better, *the hem, or fringe*. The "hem" of the garment was probably the blue border or fringe of Num. xv. 38, worn by all devout Jews, and ostentatiously enlarged by the Pharisees (Matt. xxiii. 5). (See Note on chap. v. 27.)

As many as touched.—The wide-spread belief may be noted as the natural result of the miracle already recorded in chap. vi. 25—34, and as the touch implied the faith which was the condition of receptivity, it was now also, as before, effective. In the description of the works of healing wrought by Peter in Acts v. 15, we have a scene almost identical.

Were made whole.—Literally, *were saved or made sound*, as far as their bodies were concerned, the word perhaps implying, as in chap. v. 34, that there was also the gift of a salvation of a higher kind.

VII.

⁽¹⁻²³⁾ Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and

tain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem.

(2) And when they saw some of his disciples eat

¹ Or, common.

bread with defiled,¹ that is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault.

(3) For the Pharisees, and

certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem. — The presence of these actors on the scene is every way significant. They had been prominent in like accusations. It was by them that our Lord had been accused of blasphemy in forgiving sins (chap. ii. 7), of eating and drinking with publicans and sinners (chap. ii. 16), of disregarding fasts (chap. ii. 18), of casting out devils by Beelzebub (chap. iii. 22), of Sabbath-breaking (chap. ii. 24). It was, we may believe, their presence in the synagogue of Capernaum which led our Lord to adopt (as in John vi. 26—65) a form of teaching so unlike the usual tenor of that of His Galilean ministry. And now they return to the charge again with a new and characteristic accusation.

(2) **With defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands.** — The first word means literally *common*, and is so rendered in all the earlier English versions. This came to be associated, as in Acts x. 14, with what was “unclean,” and so, for Jews at all events, the word acquired a new meaning. St. Mark’s Gentile readers, however, were not likely to understand what was meant by “common hands,” and therefore he adds his explanation of “unwashed.”

They found fault. — St. Mark, writing for Gentiles, explains the nature of the tradition more fully. What the Pharisees insisted on was not cleanliness as such, on sanitary or social grounds, but

the avoidance of ceremonial pollution. They shrank not from dirt, but from defilement. If they had been in the market, they might have come in contact with the heathen or the publican. If they ate or drank out of a metal or earthenware cup, the last lip that touched it might have been that of a heathen. If they reclined on a couch, a heathen might have reclined before them, and therefore these too needed purification. The pride which led them to stand aloof from the rest of mankind showed itself in this, as in all their other traditions. Indifference to their rules in peasants and fishermen, as such—as belonging to the crowd whom they scorned as the brute “people of the earth”—they could afford to tolerate.

What shocked them was to see the disciples of One who claimed to be a Prophet or a Rabbi indulging in that indifference. According to their traditions, the act of which they complained stood on the same level as sexual impurity, and exposed those who were guilty of it to the excommunication of the Sanhedrin, or great Council.

(3) **For the Pharisees, and all the Jews.** — For the sake of the same class of readers, St. Mark adds another explanatory note. The custom of which he speaks was not, he says, peculiar to the Pharisees as a sect; it had passed, through their influence, to the whole body of the people.

Oft. — The Greek MSS. present

all the Jews, except they wash *their* hands oft,¹ eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. ⁽⁴⁾ And *when they come from the market,*

¹ Or, *diligently; in the original, with the fist; Theophylact up to the elbow.*

except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and

two readings—one, of which this is the natural meaning; another, which means literally, “*with the fist*,” and figuratively, like our English phrase, “tooth and nail,” “*with might and main*.” The evidence is, on the whole, in favour of the latter, though the Sinaitic MS. supports the former. Some interpreters, however, adopt the marginal rendering “up to the elbow,” or “with a fist-full of water,” but neither of these renderings is philologically tenable. All the chief English versions give “oft,” following the Vulgate “*crebro*.”

⁽⁴⁾ **Except they wash.**—The Greek verb differs from that in the previous verse, and implies the washing or immersion (the verb is that from which our word “baptise” comes to us) of the whole body, as the former does of part. The idea on which the practice rested was, as stated in the Note on verse 2, not one of cleanliness or health, but of arrogant exclusiveness, fastening on the thought of ceremonial purity. In the Vatican and Sinaitic MSS. we have the remarkable variation, *Except they sprinkle themselves*. The reading may have been of the nature of an explanatory gloss, but “sprinkling” was, as a matter of fact, the ordinary process of purification (Num. viii. 7; xix. 13; Ezek. xxxvi. 25; Heb. ix. 13),

and it is not easy to see how a total immersion of the body could commonly have been practicable. The six waterpots, after the manner of “the purifying of the Jews” (John ii. 6), indicates the sprinkling process rather than that of immersion.

Washing.—Literally, in the plural, *baptisms*; but the form of the word is masculine, while that used for the sacramental rite is neuter. The masculine occurs again, probably in the same sense, as meaning ablutions generally, in Heb. vi. 2. The distinction between the masculine and the neuter forms is interesting as an illustration of the process of desynonymising which plays so large a part in the development of languages.

Pots.—The Greek word (*xestes*) may be noted as a corrupt form of *sextarius*, the sixth part of a Roman congius, a measure not far from our English gallon, and therefore taking its place among the Latin words used by St. Mark. (See *Introduction*.)

Tables.—Better, *beds or couches*—i.e., the low wide benches which were placed near the tables, and on which the guests reclined instead of sitting. These also had to be scrupulously washed, because it was possible that a heathen might have lain on them. The word is used in the same sense as in chap. iv. 21. It cannot possibly mean “tables,”

pots,¹ brazen vessels, and of tables.² (5) Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands? (6) He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it

¹ Sextarius is about a pint and an half.
² Or, *beds*.
α *Isa.* 29.
13;
Matt.
15. 8.

is written, This people honoureth me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from me.^a (7) Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men. (8) For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots

though most of the early English versions agree with the present in so rendering it. Wiclif and the Rhemish give "beds." In the Sinatic, Vatican, and some other MSS. the word is omitted altogether.

(5) **With unwashen hands.**—The better MSS. give, "with *defiled* hands," the word being the same as before. It was probable that the Pharisees would use the stronger word in their question, equally probable that a transcriber might think it better to substitute that which was the more easily understood.

(6) **Well hath Esaias prophesied.**—Strictly, *well did Esaias prophesy*. In the words that follow we find in the Greek an emphatic use of the definite article "of you *the* hypocrites."

This people honoureth me with their lips.—The quotation is given substantially from the Greek version of Isaiah xxix. 13. We have already seen in chap. iv. 12 how the Pharisees and those who followed them were taught to see their own likeness in the language of the prophet. Now the mirror is held up once more, and they are seen to have been anticipated by an ear-

lier generation in that very substitution of human for divine ordinances for which our Lord reproves them.

(7) **In vain do they worship me.**—The word used here and in Matt. xv. 9 is not that commonly used, as in chap. v. 6, to express the outward act of homage, but one which expresses, as in Acts xviii. 13, what at least claimed to be inward devotion.

Teaching for doctrines.—The English version adopts what was, perhaps, the only feasible way of expressing the emphatic reduplication of the same root in the verb and noun of the Greek. Literally, *teaching teachings*.

The commandments.—The two Greek words used for "commandment" in this and the following verses are, though closely allied, not quite the same in meaning; that in this verse pointing to many detailed precepts; that in the next to the commandment which is "exceeding broad."

(8) **As the washing of pots and cups.**—Many of the better MSS. and versions omit the whole of the latter part of this verse. On internal grounds, however, it is

and cups : and many other such like things ye do.

⁽⁹⁾ And he said unto them, Full well ye reject¹ the commandment of God, that

¹ Or, frustrate.

ye may keep your own tradition. ⁽¹⁰⁾ For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother ; and, Whoso curseth father or

hardly likely that such words should have been added as a note, and it is likely enough that the passage should have been altered by a transcriber, to make it agree with the report in St. Matthew.

⁽⁹⁾ **Full well ye reject.**—The adverb, which has almost the sense of “excellently well,” is peculiar to St. Mark, and has in it the ring of a scathing and indignant irony, especially as following on the use of the same word in verse 6. Their conduct was an “admirable” fulfilment of Isaiah’s “admirable” prophecy. The word “reject” is hardly formal enough, the Greek conveying the idea, as in Gal. iii. 15, Heb. vii. 18, of “rescinding” or “repealing.” This the Pharisees practically did when they added traditions which pretended to be interpretations, but were in reality at variance with it. And they did it, as with open eyes, sacrificing the higher obligation *in order* that they might maintain the lower.

⁽¹⁰⁾ **Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother.**—At first it might seem as if our Lord Himself, no less than the Pharisees, had taught men to think lightly of the commandment on which He now lays stress. He had called on men to forsake father and mother for the sake of the gospel (Matt. iv. 18, 22), and had excluded from discipleship those who loved father and mother more than they loved Him (Matt. x. 37). In words spoken afterwards He bade men,

in words of yet harsher sound, to “hate father and mother” (Luke xiv. 26) if they would be His disciples. We need not close our eyes to the difficulty which thus presents itself. But the answer is not far to seek. In our Lord’s teaching, a lower, natural duty was to give way exceptionally to a higher and supernatural one ; otherwise it remained in full force. In that of the Pharisees the natural duty, enforced by a direct divine commandment, was made to give way to one which was purely human, arbitrary, and conventional. And it lies in the nature of the case, that the surrender of natural affection which our Lord required was compatible with all due provision for the wants of father and mother, and was absolutely incompatible with retaining property on which they had an equitable claim. The two cases were not only not analogous, but stood on an entirely different footing. Self-sacrifice was the principle involved in the one case, self-seeking in the other.

Whoso curseth father or mother.—The Law of Exod. xxi. 17, Lev. xx. 9, is clearly cited by our Lord with a meaning wider and deeper than that of the letter. The Pharisees would probably have shrunk with horror at the thought of “cursing” a father, but those who did not honour by supporting did not bless, and not to bless in this instance was to curse,

mother, let him die the death: ⁽¹¹⁾ but ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, *It is Corban,*^a that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; *he shall be free.* ⁽¹²⁾ And ye

a Matt.
15. 5.

suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; ⁽¹³⁾ making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.

The Corban vow of consecration had become practically an execration.

⁽¹¹⁾ **It is Corban.**—The Hebrew word is peculiar to St. Mark. It occurs frequently in Leviticus and Numbers (*e.g.*, Lev. ii. 1, 5; Num. vii. 3, 5), and is translated generally by "offering," sometimes by "oblation" (Lev. ii. 13; iii. 1), but elsewhere in the Old Testament it only appears in Ezek. xx. 28; xl. 43. It had come to be applied specifically (as in the Greek of Matt. xxvii. 6; Jos. Wars, ii. 9, § 4) to the sacred treasure of the Temple. The casuistry of the scribes in this matter seems at first so monstrous that it would be hard to understand how it could have approved itself to any intelligent interpreters of the Law, were it not that the teaching of scholastic and Jesuit moralists presents instances, not less striking, of perverted ingenuity. The train of thought which led them to so startling a conclusion would seem to have been this: to divert to lower human uses that which has been consecrated to God is acknowledged to be sacrilege, and therefore a man who turned all his property, or any part of it, into a Corban, or oblation, was bound not to expend it on the support even of his nearest relations. But the time of fulfilling the vow

of consecration was left to his own discretion, and no one had a right to call him to account for delay. With this loophole, the Corban practice became an easy method of evading natural obligations. It might be pleaded in bar of the claims of nearest relationship, and yet all the while the man might retain the usufruct of his property, and defer the fulfilment of his vow to the last hour of life. It might further be questioned whether the heir, in such a case, was bound to carry into effect the vow which had been made by the previous possessor of the estate. It would seem, indeed, that this casuistry went still further, and that the consecration might be only relative, as stopping the claims of this or that person, and expiring when they passed away.

He shall be free.—The words, as the italics show, have nothing corresponding to them in the Greek, nor are they needed, if only, with some of the best MSS., we strike out the conjunction "and" from the next verse. So the sentence runs, "*If a man shall say . . . ye suffer him no more . . .*"

⁽¹³⁾ **Making the word of God of none effect.**—Again the Greek word is somewhat more technical, *making null and void, cancelling*, as in Gal. iii. 17.

(14) And when he had called all the people *unto him*,^a he said unto them, Harken unto me every one *of you*, and understand: (15) There is nothing from without a man, that

^a Matt.
13 10.

entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man. (16) If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. (17) And when he

Through your tradition.—Here the structure of the sentence points to the “tradition” as being the instrument with which the Law was made null and void. In Matt. xv. 6 the meaning is slightly different, and implies, as above in verse 9, that they made void the Law *for the sake* of their tradition.

Many such like things.—Assuming the words “washing of cups and pots . . . and many other such like things,” in verse 8, to be genuine, there is an emphatic scorn expressed in this iteration of the same formula.

(14) And when he had called all the people.—The better MSS. give “when he had *again* called the multitude . . .” The act was more startling and suggestive than appears on the surface. He did not appeal to the authority of great names or of a higher tribunal. He removed the case, as it were, to another court, which His opponents did not recognise, and turned from the disputes and traditions of the schools to the unperturbed conscience of the common people.

(15) There is nothing from without a man . . .—Up to this time the question had been debated indirectly. The scribes had been convicted of unfitness to speak with authority on moral questions. Now

a great broad principle is asserted, which not only cut at the root of Pharisaism, but, in its ultimate tendency, swept away the whole Levitical system of ceremonial purity—the distinction between clean and unclean meats and the like. It was, as the amazement of the disciples showed, far beyond their grasp as yet. Even after the day of Pentecost, Peter still prided himself on the observance of the Law which was thus annulled, and boasted that he had never “eaten anything common or unclean” (Acts x. 14). So slow were even those who had sat at the feet of Jesus to take in the thought that purity was inward and not outward, a spiritual and not a physical quality.

(16) If any man have ears to hear.—It was with this formula that our Lord had closed some at least of His parables (chap. iv. 9; Matt. xiii. 10). And it was probably this that led to the form which the inquiry of the disciples took when they came to ask their Master “concerning the parable.” The whole verse is, however, omitted in many of the best MSS., including the Vatican and Sinaitic, and may have been originally a marginal note written by some early transcriber to call attention to the truth stated in the text.

(17) His disciples asked him.

was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable. ⁽¹⁸⁾ And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not

perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, *it* cannot defile him; ⁽¹⁹⁾ because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into

—The sequence of events appears to have been as follows. The Pharisees drew back as in holy horror at the boldness with which the new Teacher set Himself, not only above their traditions, but above laws which they looked on as divine, and therefore permanent (Matt. xv. 12). The multitude heard in silence a teaching so unlike that with which they had been familiar from their youth. Even the disciples were half perplexed at the teaching itself, half afraid of what might be its immediate consequences. They came, when he entered into the house (probably Peter's), with their question, "Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended?" (Matt. xv. 12.) Had their Master calculated the consequences of thus attacking, not individual members or individual traditions of the party, but its fundamental principle, that which was, so to speak, its *very raison d'être*? And the words themselves, was it possible to take them literally? Had He not spoken them as a parable and dark saying that required explanation?

⁽¹⁸⁾ **Are ye so without understanding also?**—The pronoun is emphatic: "Ye, my disciples, who have heard from My lips the spiritual nature of My kingdom, are ye too, like the Pharisees, still such backward scholars?" The question reminds us, in its tone of mingled

sadness and reproof, of that which we have met in chap. iv. 13, "Know ye not this parable? And how will ye know all parables?"

⁽¹⁹⁾ **It entereth not into his heart.**—The words are not in St. Matthew, and emphasise the contrast with what follows. The "heart" is, after the common Hebrew idiom, the symbol of the mind as well as the affections. Comp. Prov. vii. 7; ix. 4, 16; x. 13, in all of which "understanding" stands for the Hebrew of "heart."

And goeth out into the draught.—The word is used in its old English meaning, as equivalent to "drain," "sewer," "cesspool" (see 2 Kings x. 27). The principle implied is that a process purely physical from first to last cannot in itself bring any moral defilement. It was possible, of course, that the appetites connected with that process might bring the taint of moral evil, possibly that wine or strong drink might stimulate evil lusts; but then these appetites were there before the food, and they took their place among the things that came "out of the heart," and not into it. It was not as a thing unclean in itself, but because it roused the lust or hate that the wine-cup defiled the drunkard.

Purging all meats.—This also is peculiar to St. Mark, and presents some special difficulties.

the draught, purging all meats? ⁽²⁰⁾ And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. ⁽²¹⁾ For from within,^a out of the heart of men,

^a Gen. 6.
5 & 8. 21;
Matt.
15. 19.

proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, ⁽²²⁾ thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolish-

In the commonly received text, the participle is in the neuter nominative, agreeing with the nominative to the verb "goeth out." But in this construction it is difficult to see in what sense that which goeth into the mouth—itsself an article of food, with no special character—can be said to purge or cleanse all other forms of food. The better MSS., however, give the participle in the masculine. This has been explained by many as a grammatical anomaly, and the participle being treated as if it agreed (though in a different case) with the word "draught" or "cesspool," the latter is said to purge all meats (almost in the medical sense of the term) as removing the *excreta*, or impure parts, from them, and leaving only that which nourishes the body. A far better construction, both as to grammar and meaning, is found by making the word "purging," or better, *cleansing*, agree with the subject of the verb "He saith," in verse 18—*He saith this . . . and in so saying, cleanseth all meats*. So taken, the words anticipate, in almost identical terms, the truth of Acts x. 15, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." The construction is tenable grammatically, has the support of high authority both ancient and modern, and obviously gives a much better sense. It is a possible conjecture that the words "cleansing all

meats" may have been, at first, a marginal note (like the addition in verse 16), attached to "He saith," and have afterwards found their way into the text.

⁽²¹⁾ **Evil thoughts . . .**—The plural form points to the manifold variety of the forms of guilt under each several head. In the corresponding passage of St. Matthew, the order is in some measure an ascending one, beginning with the "thoughts," or rather trains of thought, which are the first suggestions of evil, and ending in the "blasphemies" or revilings which, directly or indirectly, have God as well as man for their object. In this beginning and end we may trace a reference to those "evil surmises," acts of "over-reaching" and "villainy," which had led the Pharisees, as in Matt. xii. 24, to words which were blasphemy against the Son of Man, and came perilously near to the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

⁽²²⁾ **Covetousness, wickedness.**—The Greek words for these are, like the preceding, in the plural, as pointing to the manifold forms in which the sins show themselves. In the Greek for "wickedness" we have a somewhat more specific idea than in the English, the character of a "villain" or "scoundrel."

An evil eye.—As explained by Matt. xx. 15, the "evil eye" is that which looks askance on the good of

ness: ⁽²³⁾ all these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

⁽²⁴⁾ And from thence he arose,^a and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon,

^a Matt.
15. 21.

and entered into an house, and would have no man know *it*: but he could not be hid. ⁽²⁵⁾ For a *certain* woman, whose young daughter had an unclean

others—i.e., envy in its most malignant form. The word appears in this sense in Prov. xxviii. 22. In the popular superstitions of the East, and of Italy and Spain, the glance of such an eye is thought to have a special power for evil. The possessor of it is known as a *gettatore*, a “thrower of baleful glances,” and men wear charms to protect themselves against it. The original idea is, indeed, preserved in our word “envy,” derived, as it is, from *invidere*.

Blasphemy.—The context makes it probable that the word at least includes railing and reviling words addressed to men (1 Pet. iv. 4; 2 Pet. ii. 2, *et al.*)

Pride.—Better, perhaps, *haughtiness* or *arrogance*. This is the only passage in the New Testament where the word so translated occurs. The cognate adjective meets us in Rom. i. 30; 2 Tim. iii. 2.

Foolishness.—This, again, is a rare word in the New Testament, meeting us only in 2 Cor. xi. 1, 17, 21. As interpreted by Prov. i. 22; v. 5; xiv. 18; xv. 20, it is the folly which consists in the absence of the fear of God, the infatuation of impiety.

⁽²⁴⁾ **Into the borders of Tyre and Sidon.**—Some of the better MSS. omit the latter name here, and reserve it for verse 31, where see Note. They are, however, found in the Sinaitic, the Alexandrian, and the Vatican. What we read

there shows us that we have here the one recorded exception to that self-imposed law of His ministry which kept Him within the limits of the land of Israel. To the disciples it might seem that He was simply withdrawing from conflict with the excited hostility of His Pharisee opponents. We may see a relation between the two acts not unlike that which afterwards connected the vision of Peter at Joppa with his entry into the house of Cornelius at Cæsarea. He was showing in act, as before in word (Matt. xi. 21), that He regarded Tyre and Sidon as standing on the same level as Chorazin and Bethsaida. The dust of the heathen cities was not more defiling than that of Capernaum. The journey from Capernaum to Tyre was one which might be made in one long day of active walking.

Entered into an house.—The fact is peculiar to St. Mark, and seems specified as an indication of our Lord's wish to avoid publicity. He had come, not to carry on His work as preaching the kingdom of God, but for retirement, and possibly to avoid collision with the Pharisees who were infuriated at His recent teaching. The fact that “He could not be hid” shows that his fame had preceded him. In the earlier stages of His ministry, He had had hearers “from Tyre and Sidon” (chap. iii. 8); and the woman herself, who

spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet :

(26) the woman was a Greek,¹ a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him that

¹ Or, Gentile.

he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter.

(27) But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not

clearly knew Him by sight, may have been one of them. The presence of His disciples, as they followed Him, could hardly fail also to attract attention.

(26) **A Greek**—i.e., in the sense which the word had gained in Palestine, not as of Hellenic descent, but as being a Gentile, as in Rom. i. 16; ii. 9, 10. The modern use of "Frank" in the East for Europeans of every country offers an analogous extension of the original meaning of a name.

Syrophenician.—The word, which occurs in Juvenal (*Sat.* viii. 159), may be noted as an instance of St. Mark's tendency to use Latin forms. The Emperor Hadrian divided the province of Syria into three parts—Syria proper, Syro-Phœnicia, and Syria-Palaestina—and we may well believe that this official distinction rested on a pre-existing nomenclature. In St. Matthew she is called a Canaanite.

The terms Canaanite and Canaan, which in the earlier books of the Old Testament were often applied in a wider sense to all the original inhabitants of what was afterwards the land of Israel (Gen. x. 18; xii. 6; Judg. i. 10), were used more specifically of Phœnicia and its inhabitants (Ex. iii. 8, 17; Ezra ix. 1, and elsewhere), and are employed by St. Matthew with that meaning.

She besought him . . .—St. Matthew (xv. 23–25) reports that

at first our Lord gave her no answer; that the disciples, weary of her importunity, urged Him to dismiss her, meaning, apparently, that He should comply with her petition; that He then made answer to them that He was not sent, save to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; that she then worshipped Him, and cried out, "Lord, help me."

(27) **Let the children first be filled.**—The precise form of the answer thus given is peculiar to St. Mark.

To cast it unto the dogs.—The word used was diminutive in its form, and as such pointed not to the wild, unclean beasts that haunt the streets of an Eastern city (Ps. lix. 6; Rev. xxii. 15), but to the tamer animals that were bred in the house, and kept as pets. The history of Tobias and his dog, in the Apocrypha, furnishes the one example in Biblical literature of this friendly relation between the dog and his master (Tobit v. 16).

The answer has, even taking this into account, a somewhat harsh sound, but it did not go beyond the language with which the woman must have been familiar, and it was probably but a common proverb, like our "Charity begins at home," indicating the line of demarcation which gave a priority to the claims of the family of Israel to those of strangers. We may well believe that there was no intentional scorn in it, though it emphasised an actual distinction.

meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs. ⁽²⁸⁾ And she

answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat

⁽²⁸⁾ Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs.—The insertion of the word "for" in many of the MSS. gives it a force which it is hard to reproduce in English, "Yet grant what I ask, for the dogs under the table . . ." The woman catches at the diminutive form which had softened the usual word of scorn, and presses the privilege which it implied. She did not ask that the "children" might be deprived of any fragment of their portion; but taking her place, contentedly, among the "dogs," she could still claim Him as her Master, and ask for the "crumbs" of His mercy. The Talmud contains a story so singularly parallel to this that it is worth reproducing. "There was a famine in the land, and stores of corn were placed under the care of Rabbi Jehudah the Holy, to be distributed to those only who were skilled in the knowledge of the Law. And behold, a man came, Jonathan, the son of Amram, and clamorously asked for his portion. The Rabbi asked him whether he knew the condition, and had fulfilled it; and then the supplicant changed his tone, and said, 'Nay, but feed me as a dog is fed, who eats of the crumbs of the feast;' and the Rabbi hearkened to his words, and gave him of the corn" (*Baba Bathra*, fol. 8, col. 2 in Nork's *Rabbinische Quellen* on Matt. xv. 27). It is significant that one at least of the disciples who must have witnessed this scene learnt afterwards

to apply the word "dogs," not to those of another race than himself, but to those only who were vile and dog-like in their lusts. (Rev. xxii. 15. Comp. also 2 Pet ii. 22.)

It is obvious that the lesson of the story stretches far and wide. Wherever man or woman is by birth, or creed, or even sin, among those whom the judgment of the heirs of religious privileges counts unworthy even of the lowest of spiritual blessings, among outcasts and heirs of shame, among the excommunicated and the heretics, there the thought that "the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs" may bring, as it has often brought, the faith that changes despair into something not far short of the full assurance of hope. A question meets us which cannot well be put aside, and which it is right to try to answer. Did our Lord from the first intend to grant her prayer, and only assume the appearance of harshness in order to test her faith? or was His own purpose at first to keep within what were for the time the appointed limits of His work, as sent to Israel only, that purpose yielding, as it were, to the pressure of the prayer of faith? Either view is tenable, but the first is, it is believed, less in harmony with our Lord's usual way of dealing with sufferers, so as to encourage and strengthen; and the second is certainly what would appear, but for the arbitrary assumption that there could be no change of purpose in our Lord's human will,

of the children's crumbs.
⁽²⁹⁾ And he said unto her,
 For this saying go thy
 way; the devil is gone out
 of thy daughter. ⁽³⁰⁾ And
 when she was come to her
 house, she found the devil
 gone out, and her daughter
 laid upon the bed.

⁽³¹⁾ And again, departing
 from the coasts of Tyre and

Sidon, he came unto the
 sea of Galilee, through the
 midst of the coasts of
 Decapolis. ⁽³²⁾ And they
 bring unto him one that
 was deaf, and had an
 impediment in his speech;
 and they beseech him to
 put his hand upon him.

⁽³³⁾ And he took him aside
 from the multitude, and

the most natural of the two. In
 itself the possibility of such a
 change belongs to the true humanity
 which, as we have seen in two in-
 stances, included the capacity for
 "wonder" (chap. vi. 6; Matt. viii.
 10).

⁽²⁹⁾ For this saying go thy
 way.—St. Mark omits the words
 "O woman, great is thy faith,"
 and puts the answer to the prayer
 in a somewhat more definite form
 than St. Matthew's "Be it unto
 thee even as thou wilt."

⁽³⁰⁾ Her daughter laid upon
 the bed.—The graphic descrip-
 tion, as usual, is characteristic of
 St. Mark. The Greek for "laid"
 implies that she had thrown her-
 self upon the bed, probably ex-
 hausted by the final spasmodic
 struggle which preceded her
 deliverance. (Comp. chap. ix. 26.)

⁽³¹⁾ Departing from the
 coasts of Tyre and Sidon.—
 The better MSS. give "from the
 coasts of Tyre through Sidon."
 The latter city lay about twenty
 miles to the north. Accepting this
 reading, it marks the extreme limit
 of our Lord's journeyings—we can
 hardly say of His ministry, for
 here is no indication that He went

there as a preacher of the Kingdom.
 We may, however, perhaps, trace
 the feeling which prompted the
 visit in the words, "It shall be
 more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon,"
 in Luke x. 14, and in the "Other
 sheep, not of this fold," in John
 x. 16.

Decapolis.—Another instance
 of St. Mark's use of a Roman
 nomenclature. St. Matthew says
 simply, "He departed thence, and
 came by the Sea of Galilee." For
 Decapolis, see Note on chap. v. 20.

⁽³²⁾ They bring unto him
 one that was deaf.—The nar-
 rative that follows is peculiar to
 St. Mark. The locality is not
 named, but was probably some-
 where near the eastern shore of the
 Sea of Galilee.

Had an impediment in his
 speech.—The English rendering
 is quite accurate, but it may be
 noted that the word which St.
 Mark uses stands for "dumb" in
 the Greek version of Isa. xxxv. 6,
 and may therefore have been used
 by him to connect the miracle
 which he describes with that pro-
 phecy.

⁽³³⁾ He took him aside from
 the multitude.—We trace in this,

put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue; ⁽³⁴⁾ and looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened. ⁽³⁵⁾ And straight-

way his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain. ⁽³⁶⁾ And he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them,

and in the manual acts that followed, the same tender considerateness for the infirmities of the sufferer as in our Lord's treatment of the blind. (See Matt. ix. 29; Mark viii. 22; John ix. 6.) Here the man could not find in the pitying tones of the voice of the Healer that on which his faith could fasten, and the acts came in to fill up the void. Each was obviously symbolic, the sign as well as means of healing. The man's ears were to be opened by that touch (Pss. xxxviii. 13; xl. 6; Isa. l. 5). The paralysed tongue was to be quickened into vitality. The mediæval Latin Church, with its tendency to perpetuate symbols that have lost their meaning, introduced a like act into its baptismal service.

⁽³⁴⁾ **Looking up to heaven, he sighed.**—Better, *groaned*, as in Rom. viii. 23; 2 Cor. v. 2, 4. The look, it is clear, implied prayer, as in John xi. 41. The "sigh," too, has its counterpart in the "groans" and "tears" of John xi. 33, 35, 38, and finds its analogue in the sadness of sympathy which we feel at the sight of suffering, even when we know that we have the power to remove its cause. Comp. Keble's lines—

"The Son of God in doing good
Was fain to look to Heaven and sigh:
And shall the heirs of sinful blood
Seek joy unmixed in charity?"

God will not let love's work impart
Full solace, lest it steal the heart;
Be thou content in tears to sow,
Blessing, like Jesus, in thy woe."

Christian Year,
Twelfth Sunday after Trinity.

Ephphatha.—Another instance of St. Mark's reproduction of the very syllables uttered by our Lord (see *Introduction*, and Note on chap. v. 41), and of the apparently exceptional characters of these utterances in Aramaic.

⁽³⁵⁾ **His ears.**—Literally, *his hearing*, or, as the word is in the plural, *his organs of hearing*.

The string of his tongue.—Better, *bond*, that which confined and hampered his speech. (Comp. Luke i. 64; xiii. 16.) There is no ground for thinking that St. Mark used the word in any anatomical sense, as the English word seems to suggest, for a "nerve" or "tendon," as in the "eye-strings" of the original text of the "Rock of Ages."

⁽³⁶⁾ **And he charged them that they should tell no man.** The command was, if we may say so, characteristic of our Lord's works of healing. (See Note on chap. v. 43.) In this case it may have been connected with the obvious desire for retirement which marks this period of His ministry (verse 24). Joy and wonder and gratitude were, however, as we read, stronger than the sense of obedience. They could not look

so much the more a great deal they published it; ⁽³⁷⁾ and were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

CHAPTER VIII.—

⁽¹⁾ In those days the multitude being very great,^a

A. D. 32.

a Matt.
15. 32.

and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples unto him, and saith unto them, ⁽²⁾ I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat: ⁽³⁾ and if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from

on the commands which restrained their gratitude and deprived the Healer of the honour due to Him as binding.

⁽³⁷⁾ **And the dumb to speak.**—We note the distinction between St. Mark's accurate description, and the less precise language of popular amazement in Matt. xv. 31, "they glorified the God of Israel."

VIII.

⁽¹⁾ **In those days.**—The note of sequence is comparatively vague, but both in St. Matthew and St. Mark the feeding of the Four Thousand comes after the return from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.

The multitude being very great.—Many of the better MSS. give, "There being again a great multitude."

⁽²⁾ **I have compassion on the multitude.**—Literally, *I am touched to the heart for* . . . Here also, as in chaps. i. 41; vi. 34; Matt. xv. 32; xx. 34, we find that the exercise of miraculous power in its highest form originates, not in answer to a challenge, or as being offered

as a proof of a divine mission, but simply from compassion. Three days had passed, and still the crowds hung on His words and waited for His loving acts, and now they began to show signs of exhaustion that moved His sympathy.

⁽³⁾ **For divers of them.**—Better, *and some of them are* (or, *are come*) *from afar*. The words are given as spoken by our Lord, and in some MSS. are in the perfect tense. Both the previous verses imply that the mountain or hill on the shore of the Sea of Galilee to which our Lord had retired (Matt. xv. 31) was remote from towns or villages. This, and the previous mention of Decapolis, make it probable that it was on the eastern side of the lake. On the other hand, what is known or conjectured as to the site of Dalmanutha and Magdala points to the western side. Assuming the words to have been spoken by our Lord, and not to have been a note of the Evangelist's, they are interesting as showing that our Lord sought to impress His own considerate thoughtfulness on the minds of his disciples.

far. ⁽⁴⁾ And his disciples answered him, From whence can a man satisfy these *men* with bread here in the wilderness? ⁽⁵⁾ And he asked them, How many

loaves have ye? And they said, Seven. ⁽⁶⁾ And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks,

⁽⁴⁾ His disciples answered him.—Here, on the assumption that we are dealing with a true record, a difficulty of a new kind meets us. How was it, we ask, that the disciples, with the memory of the former miracle still fresh in their recollection, should answer as before with the same child-like perplexity? Why did they not at once assume that the same divine power could be put forth to meet a like want now? The answers to that question may, perhaps, be grouped as follows:—(1) It is not easy for us to put ourselves in the position of men who witnessed, as they did, these workings of a supernatural might. We think of the Power as inherent, and therefore permanent. To them it might seem intermittent, a gift that came and went. Their daily necessities had been supplied, before and after the great event, in the common way of gift or purchase. The gathering of the fragments after the feeding of the Five Thousand (Matt. xiv. 20; John vi. 12) seemed to imply that they were not to rely on the repetition of the wonder. (2) The fact that three days had passed, and that hunger had been allowed to pass on to the borders of exhaustion, might well have led them to think that the power was not to be exerted now. (3) Our Lord's implied question—though, as before, He Himself “knew what He would do” (John vi. 6)—must have appeared to them

to exclude the thought that He was about to make use again of that reserve of power which He had displayed before. They would seem to themselves to be simply following in His footsteps when they answered His question as on the level which He Himself thus appeared to choose.

Satisfy.—The verb is the same as the “filled” of Mark vii. 27.

Here in the wilderness.—The word here, as in Matt. xv. 33, is not the one usually employed, and is abstract, not concrete, in its form, and without the articles, suggesting the idea, *i.e.*, of “loneliness;” and through that, of a lonely place. It is used in a like sense in 2 Cor. xi. 26; Heb. xi. 38. Like many other abstract words, it seems to have tended to a concrete meaning; but there is always an appreciable shade of difference.

⁽⁵⁾ **Seven.**—The resemblance of the answer to that which had been given before is, at least, interesting as showing what was the provision habitually made by the travelling company of preachers for the supply of their daily wants. The few barley loaves (John vi. 9) and dried fishes, this was all their store, as they went from village to village, or passed days and nights on the hills of Galilee.

⁽⁶⁾ **He commanded the people to sit down on the ground.**—Probably, with the same orderly precision as before, by hundreds

and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before them; and they did set them before the people. ⁽⁷⁾ And they had a few small fishes: and he blessed, and commanded to set them also before them. ⁽⁸⁾ So they did eat, and were filled:

and they took up of the broken *meat* that was left seven baskets. ⁽⁹⁾ And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and he sent them away.

⁽¹⁰⁾ And straightway he entered into a ship with his disciples, and came into

and by fifties, the women and children, as we learn from Matt. xv. 38, being in this instance also grouped together apart from the men.

To sit down.—The Greek word implies the usual Eastern position of reclining, rather than our sitting.

And gave thanks.—This and the “blessing” of the next verse were probably all but identical formulæ. (See Notes on chap. v. 41; xiv. 22, 23.) In point of order the “blessing” seems to have preceded the “thanksgiving.”

⁽⁸⁾ **Of the broken meat that was left.**—More literally, though, perhaps, hardly in the style of our version, *the surplus of the fragments*.

Seven baskets.—The word (*spurides*) differs from the *cophini* of chap. vi. 42, as much as our “hamper” differs from “basket.” A comparison of Acts ix. 25 with 2 Cor. xi. 33 shows that it was equivalent to *sarganè*, a basket of wicker or rope-work large enough to hold a man. As it is hardly likely that these could have been carried by the disciples on their journey, we must think of them as having been probably brought by some of the multitude to hold their provisions. The fact that the disciples were shortly afterwards (Matt. xvi. 7)

again without provision, suggests the thought that the fragments themselves had been in their turn distributed, as the twelve baskets full had been before, to the poor of the villages in the district to which our Lord and the disciples now turned their courses. The differences in detail between this and the previous miracle of a like nature are obviously decisive against the second being, as some over-sceptical critics have thought, a mere reproduction of the first.

⁽¹⁰⁾ **He entered into a ship.**—Better, *the ship*, or boat.

Dalmanutha.—St. Mark’s use of the word, instead of the “Magdala” or “Magada” of St. Matthew, may be noted as an instance of his independence. It is mentioned by no other writer. The narrative implies that Magdala was on the western shore of the lake, and it is probably to be identified with the modern village of *El Mejdol*, about three miles above *Tabarieh* (Tiberias). The name would seem to be an altered form of the Hebrew *Migdol*, a tower. On the assumption that “Mary, called Magdalene,” derived her name from a town of that name, we may think of our Lord’s visit as having been in some way connected with her presence. It is clear that

the parts of Dalmanutha.
⁽¹¹⁾ And the Pharisees came forth,^a and began to question with him, seeking of

^a Matt.
16. 1.

him a sign from heaven, tempting him. ⁽¹²⁾ And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth

the company of devout women who ministered to Him could hardly have followed Him in the more distant journey to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, and it was natural, if they did not, that they should have returned for a time to their homes. Dalmanutha has been identified with the modern *Ain-el-Bârideh*, the "cold fountain," a glen which opens upon the lake about a mile from Magdala. The remains of a village have been found in the neighbourhood.

⁽¹¹⁾ **And the Pharisees came forth.**—St. Mark, it may be noted, does not mention the presence of the Sadducees whom St. Matthew names, and gives only part of our Lord's answer. The presence of members of the latter sect, who do not elsewhere appear in our Lord's Galilean ministry, is noticeable. It is probably explained by St. Mark's version of the warning in verse 15, where "the leaven of Herod" appears as equivalent to "the leaven of the Sadducees" in St. Matthew's report. The Herodians were the Galilean Sadducees, and the union of the two hostile parties was the continuation of the alliance which had begun after our Lord's protest against the false reverence for the Sabbath, which was common to both the parties (chap. iii. 6), and which was renewed at a later period (Matt. xxii. 15, 16). On the other hand, he characteristically describes the "sighing deeply in spirit" in verse 12, which St. Matthew does not give.

Seeking of him a sign from heaven.—The signs and wonders that had been wrought on earth were not enough for the questioners. There might be a collusion, or a power, like that implied in the charge of "casting out devils by Beelzebub," preternatural, but not divine. What they asked was a sign like Samuel's thunder from the clear blue sky (1 Sam. xii. 18), or Elijah's fire from heaven (1 Kings xviii. 38); or, possibly, following the train of thought suggested by the discourse at Capernaum, now definitely asking, what they hinted then (John vi. 30, 31), for bread, not multiplied on earth, but coming straight from heaven. The demand might be prompted by many different motives. It might imply a half-belief craving for fuller proof than the works of healing, to which our Lord, in His answer to the disciples of the Baptist, had pointed as sufficient (Matt. xi. 5). It might come from the cynical unbelief which thought that He could not, or would not, work the kind of sign which they demanded, and that this seeming failure would alienate the multitude who had been disposed, as in verses 1 and 2, to follow Him. On the temper which gave birth to the question, see 1 Cor. i. 22. In all sense of the words they were "tempting" Him, testing Him, and trying to work His downfall.

⁽¹²⁾ **There shall no sign be given.**—Literally, *if there shall be a sign given*—the Hebrew idiom

this generation seek after a sign? verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation.

(13) And he left them, and entering into the ship again departed to the other side.

(14) Now the disciples had

a Matt.
16. 5.

forgotten to take bread,^a neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf. ⁽¹⁵⁾ And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod.

for a strong negation, as in Heb. iv. 5. We note the omission (1) of the striking illustration from the signs which were seen in heaven in the daily course of nature, and (2) of "the sign of the prophet Jonas," as given in Matt. xvi. 4; possibly as not likely to be understood by St. Mark's Gentile readers.

(13) **The other side.**—Probably from Dalmanutha, on the west, to the east coast again.

(14) **Now the disciples.**—Better, *and the disciples had forgotten*, in close connection with the preceding verse, and not as the beginning of a new section. St. Mark, with his usual precision in detail, states that they had but "one loaf" with them. Either the suddenness of their Lord's departure had deprived them of their customary forethought, or, it may be, they were beginning to depend wrongly on the wonder-working power, as though it would be used, not as before, to supply the wants of the famished multitude, but as rendering that forethought needless for themselves.

(15) **He charged them.**—The verb is in the imperfect tense, and implies that the command was more than once repeated. Hence they, too, "were reasoning," more than once, what was the meaning of the

precept on which so much stress was laid.

Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees . . .—The form of the warning was obviously determined by the fact just narrated. The Master saw the perplexed looks and heard the self-reproaching or mutually accusing whispers of the disciples, and made them the text of a proverb which was a concentrated parable. As St. Mark gives the words, they stand, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod," and this, if we have to make our choice, we may believe to have been the form in which they were actually spoken; St. Matthew, or the report which he followed, substituting for the less known Herodians the better known Sadducees. The language of the tetrarch, as has been shown (see Note on chap. vi. 14), implies that Sadduceeism had been the prevailing belief of his life, and the current of Jewish political, not to say religious, sympathies, naturally led the Sadducean priests, courting (as Caiaphas did) the favour of the Roman rulers, to fraternise with the scribes who attached themselves to the party of the tetrarch. (Comp. Acts v. 17.)

The leaven of Herod.—The words imply the presence among the questioners of verse 11 of others

(16) And they reasoned among themselves, saying, *It is because we have no bread.*^a (17) And when Jesus knew *it*, he saith unto them, Why reason

a Matt.
16. 7.

ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened? (18) Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye

besides the Pharisees. On the connection between the "leaven of Herod" and that of "the Sadducees" in Matt. xvi. 6, see the preceding Note.

(16) **It is because we have no bread.**—There is a childish *naïveté* in their self-questioning which testifies to the absolute originality and truthfulness of the record, and so to the genuineness of the question which follows, and which assumes the reality of the two previous miracles. The train of thought which connected the warning and the fact was probably hardly formulated even in their own minds. It may be that they imagined that as the Pharisee would not eat of bread that had been defiled by the touch of heathen or publican, so their Master forbade them, however great their need, to receive food at the hands of either of the sects that had combined against Him.

(17) **Why reason ye.**—Our Lord reproves, as in the "ye of little faith" in Matt. xvi. 8, not merely the want of discernment which made them slow to receive the meaning of the similitude, but their want of faith. The discernment depended (in part, at least) on imaginative power, or acquired culture, for the lack of which they were not responsible. But their memory of the manner in which their wants had been twice sup-

plied might at least have taught them that no such case of extreme necessity, such as they pictured to themselves, was likely to arise while He was with them, and therefore that their gross carnal interpretation of His words could not possibly be the true one. Memory in this case should have been an aid to faith, and faith, in its turn, would have quickened spiritual discernment.

Have ye your heart yet hardened?—The question is peculiar to St. Mark, as are also the two first questions in verse 18. The expression of indignant astonishment is characteristically more vivid and emphatic in St. Mark's report. The word reminds us of chap. vi. 52, where see Note.

(18) **Having eyes, see ye not?** . . . —The very form of the question must have reminded them of chap. iv. 12. They were sinking to the level of the generation that was incapable of understanding parables; going back, as it were, to the level of the lowest form in the school of the Interpreter when they ought to have been advanced scholars in the highest. There is a touch of indignation as well as sadness in their Master's reproof for their inability to understand what, after Matt. xiii. 33, ought to have been the simplest of all parables.

not? and do ye not remember? ⁽¹⁹⁾ When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve. ⁽²⁰⁾ And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven. ⁽²¹⁾ And he said unto them, How is it

that ye do not understand?

⁽²²⁾ And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him.

⁽²³⁾ And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought. ⁽²⁴⁾ And

⁽¹⁹⁾ **How many baskets.**—The distinction between the two kinds of baskets—the *cophini* and the *spurides*—is, as before noticed, strictly observed here. (See Note on verse 8.)

⁽²¹⁾ **How is it that ye do not understand?**—True to His method of education, our Lord does not Himself interpret the parable, but is, as it were, content to suggest the train of thought which led to the interpretation. And the disciples, slow of heart as they were, followed the clue thus given. "Then understood they" (Matt. xvi. 12). Memory did at last quicken faith, and faith imparted the imaginative insight which sees its way through parables and dark sayings. It at last dawned upon them that He meant them to beware of the *teaching* of the Pharisees and Sadducees. In Luke xii. 1 the "leaven of the Pharisees" is identified with "hypocrisy," the temper which is always acting a part, and simulating a character which it does not possess.

⁽²²⁾ **And he cometh to Bethsaida.**—This miracle also is re-

corded by St. Mark only. Judging by the localities named previously, Dalmanutha (verse 10), the passage across the lake (verse 13), and afterwards "the villages of Cæsarea Philippi" (verse 27), it is probable that this was the Bethsaida on the north-eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee.

⁽²³⁾ **He took the blind man by the hand.**—We note in the act the same considerate adaptation of the method of healing to the man's infirmities as in the case of the deaf man in chap. vii. 33. The natural media became helps to faith, and so brought the man into a condition of receptivity. As far as the first three Gospels are concerned, these are the two instances of the "spitting" here recorded, but it is one of the links that connect St. Mark with the fourth Gospel (John ix. 6).

If he saw ought.—The better MSS. give the very words: *Dost thou see ought?*

⁽²⁴⁾ **I see men as trees, walking.**—The better MSS. give two words expressing different forms of perception, *I behold men, for I see*

he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking.

(25) After that he put *his* hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.

a Matt.
16. 13.

(26) And he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell *it* to any in the town.

(27) And Jesus went out,^a and his disciples, into the

them walking as trees. His sight was not yet clear, but he interpreted what it told him rightly. The naturalness of this description of the first impression of the restored sense strikes every reader. From the point of view which looks on our Lord's miracles as having a symbolic character, and being, as it were, acted parables, we may see in it that which represents an analogous stage in the spiritual growth of men, when truths for which before they had no faculty of vision are seen for the first time, but are not as yet apprehended in their full or definite proportions. They need a second touch of the Divine Hand, the passing away of another film of ignorance or prejudice, and then they too see all things clearly.

(25) *Made him look up.*—Better, *he* (the man) *looked up*, or *looked searchingly*, according to the various readings.

Every man.—The better MSS. give, *all things*.

Clearly.—This is probably the right rendering of the reading given by some of the better MSS. (e.g., the Sinaitic); but the Received Text gives a word which implies that he became far as well as clear sighted. It is noticeable that the tense for "saw" is not, as before, the tense of momentary, but that of continuous action.

(26) *Neither go into the town.*—Better, *But do not go*. As in other works of healing (chap. v. 43; vii. 36), so in this, our Lord seems to have prescribed quietude after, as well as before, the miracle, as a spiritual discipline—partly, we may believe, because the work that had been done called for prayer for the right use of the new or the restored power; partly (as in Matt. xii. 16) because He would not seem Himself to court the fame of publicity. Following the line of thought taken in the Note on verse 24, we may extend the application to the work of spiritual illumination. Here also it is not good that the first clear apprehension of spiritual truths should be followed by the hasty utterances of the excitement of the new-born life. The converted man needs to go to his house, and not into the village or the town, where the babble of tongues and the glare of vanities will distract him.

(27) *The towns of Cæsarea Philippi.*—Better, *villages*. The order of the journeyings of our Lord and His disciples would seem to have been as follows:—From the coasts of Tyre and Sidon they came, passing through Sidon, and crossing the lower ridge of the Lebanon range to the plain of Kedesh Naphtali, to the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee (chap.

towns of Cæsarea Philippi:
and by the way he asked

his disciples, saying unto
them, Whom do men say

vii. 31); thence by a ship to Magdala and Dalmanutha, on the western shore (Matt. xv. 39; chap. viii. 10); thence, again crossing the lake (chap. viii. 13) to the eastern Bethsaida (chap. viii. 22); thence northwards to Cæsarea Philippi. There is in all these movements an obvious withdrawal from the populous cities (especially from Capernaum) which had been the scene of His earlier labours, and which had practically rejected Him and cast in their lot with His enemies. This last journey took them to a district which He had apparently never before visited, and to which He now came, it would seem, not as a Preacher of the kingdom, but, as before, in the journey to the borders of Tyre and Sidon (chap. vii. 24), simply for retirement and perhaps for safety. Cæsarea Philippi (so called to distinguish it from the town of the same name on the sea-coast) does not appear (unless we identify it with Laish or Dan, and for this there is no sufficient evidence) in the history of the Old Testament. Its position at the foot of Hermon led Robinson (*Researches*, iii. 404, 519) to identify it with the Baal-gad of Josh. xi. 17; xii. 7; xiii. 5, or the Baal-hermon of Judg. iii. 3; but this also hardly extends beyond the region of conjecture. The site of the city was near the chief source of the Jordan, which flowed from a cave that, under the influence of the Greek *cultus* that came in with the rule of the Syrian kings, was dedicated to Pan, and the old name of the city, Paneas, bore witness to this consecration. Herod the Great built a

temple there in honour of Augustus (Jos. *Ant.* xv. 10, § 3), and a stately palace, the ruins of which still remain, and are known as the Castle of *Subaibeh*; and his son Philip the tetrarch (to whose province it belonged) enlarged and embellished the city, and re-named it in honour of the emperor and to perpetuate his own memory. From Agrippa II. it received the name of Neroneas, as a like compliment to the emperor to whom he owed his title; but the old local name survived these passing changes, and still exists in the modern *Baniās*. With the one exception of the journey through Sidon (chap. vii. 31), it was the northern limit of our Lord's wanderings; and belonging as it does to the same period of His ministry, His visit to it may be regarded, though not as an extension of His work beyond its self-imposed limits, as indicating something like a sympathy with the out-lying heathen who made up the bulk of its population—a sense of rest, it may be, in turning to them from the ceaseless strife and bitterness which he encountered at Capernaum and Jerusalem. How the days passed which were spent on the journey, what gracious words or acts of mercy marked His track, what communings with His Father were held in the solitude of the mountain heights, are questions which we may dwell upon in reverential silence, but must be content to leave unanswered. The incident which follows is the one event of which we have any record.

He asked his disciples.—The tense of the Greek verb implies

that I am? ⁽²⁸⁾ And they

answered, John the Baptist:

that it was not a single question only, but a continued and, as it were, searching inquiry. The time was come to test the faith of the disciples thoroughly. It is significant that in St. Luke's report our Lord's question is connected with the fact that he had been praying. Looking to Matt. xvi. 17 and John xvii. 16, it is not an over-bold speculation to suggest that the prayer had been that His Father in Heaven would reveal the fulness of His truth to the minds of the disciples. In any case, the time had come when they must make up their minds whether they would accept Him as being all that He claimed to be, or fall back upon the lower and less adequate beliefs that were floating in the minds of men. His questioning had probably been preceded by an interval of silence.

Whom do men say that I am? — The Greek emphasises "men" by prefixing the article, so as to contrast the opinions of men, as such, with God's revelation. In Luke ix. 18 we have "the people," or, better "the *multitudes*" instead of men. The question suggests, what we find later on in chap. x. 32, that the Master went on in solitary communing with His own soul and with His Father, while the disciples mingled more with those who came in their way and so heard their reports. The question comes before us, as possibly it did to the disciples, with a sharp abruptness. We may believe, however, that it occupied a fitting place in the spiritual education through which our Lord was leading His disciples. It was a

time of, at least, seeming failure and partial desertion. "From that time," St. John relates, speaking of what followed after the discourse at Capernaum, "many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him" (John vi. 66). He had turned to the Twelve and asked, in tones of touching sadness, "Will ye also go away?" and had received from Peter, as the spokesman of the others, what was for the time a reassuring answer, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life;" and this had been coupled with a confession of faith like that which we now find repeated. But in the meantime there had been signs of wavering. He had had to rebuke them as being "of little faith" (Matt. xvi. 8), "undiscerning," with their "heart yet hardened" (verse 17). They had urged something like a policy of reticence in His conflict with the Pharisees (Matt. xv. 12). One of the Twelve was cherishing in his soul the "devil-temper" of a betrayer (John vi. 70). It was time, if we may so speak, that they should be put to a crucial test, and the alternative of faith or want of faith pressed home upon their consciences.

⁽²⁸⁾ **And they answered, John the Baptist.** — The passage is of the greatest possible interest, as one of the very few that indicate the impressions shaped into beliefs that were floating among the people as to our Lord's character and mission. They were based, it will be seen, in each case, upon a popular doctrine of transmigration, to which the Pharisees had given a place in their system of teaching. (See

but some say, Elias ; and | others, One of the prophets.

Note on chap. vi. 14.) The great actors of the past were still in existence. They might, at any great national crisis, reappear to continue and complete their work. Each of the answers has a further special interest of its own. (1) The identification of our Lord with the Baptist has already met us as coming from the lips of the tetrarch Antipas, adopted, but not originated, by him as explaining our Lord's mighty works (Matt. xiv. 2 ; Luke ix. 7). (2) The belief that Elijah had reappeared was of the same nature. He was expected as the forerunner of the Messiah (Mal. iv. 5). The imagination of the people had at first seen in the Baptist the reappearance of the Tishbite (John i. 21), but he, though working in the spirit and power of Elijah, had disclaimed the character which was thus ascribed to him, and it was natural that the imagination of the people should now turn to One who appeared to them as simply continuing his work. The character of our Lord's recent miracles, corresponding as it did to that which was recorded as wrought by Elijah for the widow of Sarepta (1 Kings xvii. 14), possibly even His journey to the regions which that prophet had visited, had probably strengthened that impression. (3) The name of Jeremiah, which we find in St. Matthew's report, introduces a new train of legendary thought. The impression made by that prophet on the minds of men had led to something like a mythical after-growth. It was said by the Rabbis that the spirit of Jeremiah had passed into Zechariah, and on that assumption another re-

appearance might well seem probable. He, it was believed, had hidden the ark, and the tabernacle, and the altar of incense in a cave in "the mountain where Moses climbed up and saw the heritage of God"—i.e., in Nebo, or Pisgah (2 Macc. ii. 1—7)—and was expected to come and guide the true Israel, in the time "when God should gather His people together," to the place of concealment. He had appeared to Judas Maccabeus in a vision as "a man with grey hairs and exceeding glorious," and, as the guardian prophet of the people, praying for them and for the Holy City, had given him a golden sword as the gift of God (2 Macc. xv. 13—16). As the prophet who had foretold the new covenant and the coming of the Lord our Righteousness (Jer. xxiii. 6, xxxi. 31) he was identified, as thoroughly as Isaiah, with the Messianic expectations of the people. Something, we may add, there may have been in our Lord's human aspect, as a "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," which may have helped to suggest this identification with the prophet who was, above all others of the goodly company, a prophet of lamentations and tears and woe. (Jer. xi. 19 ; xx. 14—18.) (4) The last conjecture was more vague and undefined, and was probably the resource of those who were impressed with wonder at our Lord's words and works, and yet could not bring themselves to acknowledge Him as what He claimed to be. All the four conjectures, it will be seen, fell far short of the full recognition of the Christ.

Interpreted in connection with

(29) And he saith unto them,
But whom say ye that I
am? And Peter answereth

and saith unto him, Thou
art the Christ. (30) And
he charged them that they

the vision of Dan. vii. 13, and with the current use of the term, as shown in John xii. 34, and in the Targum paraphrase of Ps. lxxx. 17 as prophetic of the Messiah, the words of the question as given by St. Matthew, "Whom do men say that I, *the Son of Man*, am?" did, in fact, assume His claim to be Christ. But it remained to be seen whether the disciples had risen to their Lord's meaning in thus speaking of Himself, and would, on their part, adopt that interpretation. The report which they made of the belief of others shows how little, at this time (whatever may have been the case earlier or later), He was regarded as the Messiah by the mass of the people.

(29) **Whom say ye?**—The pronoun is emphasised in the Greek, "But *ye*—whom (or more grammatically, *who*) say ye. . .?" The question is, as has been said, parallel in tone, though not in form, to that of John vi. 67. Had they still a distinct faith of their own? or were they, too, falling back to these popular surmises?

Thou art the Christ.—The variations in the other Gospels—St. Matthew giving, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," and St. Luke, "The Christ of God"—are interesting in their bearing on the question of literal inspiration, but do not affect the meaning; and the fullest of the three reports may be received without hesitation as the most authentic. The confession was made by Peter, partly, we may believe, as the re-

presentative of the others, partly, as the special promise that follows implies, from the personal fervour of his character. He believed himself, and had impressed his faith on them. His words reproduced the confession of John vi. 69, even verbally, if we follow the received text, but the better MSS. of that Gospel have a different reading: "Thou art *the Holy One* of God." In any form they recognised to the full our Lord's character as the Christ; they identified Him with the Son of Man in Daniel's vision, and, more than this, they recognised, as reported by St. Matthew, in that Son of Man one who was also not "*a son*" only, but, in some high incommunicable sense, "*the Son of the living God*."

(30) **And he charged them.**—

We may venture to analyse what we may reverently call the motives of this reticence. Had the disciples gone about, not only as proclaiming the kingdom and as preachers of repentance, but sounding the watchword that the Christ had come, it might not have been difficult for them to gather round Him the homage of excited crowds. It was not such homage, however, that He sought, but that which had its root in a deeper faith. It tended to present a false aspect of His kingdom to the minds of men; it tended also to prevent the consummation to which He was now directing the thoughts of His disciples as the necessary condition of His entering on the glory of His kingdom. The zeal of the multitude to make Him

should tell no man of him.

⁽³¹⁾ And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief

priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. ⁽³²⁾ And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him.

a king after their own fashion (John vi. 15) was what He deprecated and shunned. On the assumption of a connection between the writer of this Gospel and St. Peter (see *Introduction*), the omission of the promise to the latter, recorded so fully by St. Matthew, may fairly be regarded as an evidence of the humility of the Apostle, who shrank from what might seem to savour of self-assertion.

⁽³¹⁾ **And he began to teach them.**—The prominence given to the prediction shows that it came upon the minds of the disciples as something altogether new. They had failed to understand the mysterious hints of the future which we find in, "Destroy this temple" (John ii. 19), in the Son of Man being "lifted up" (John iii. 14), in the sign of the prophet "Jonas" (Matt. xii. 39; xvi. 4). Now the veil is uplifted, and the order of events is plainly foretold—the entry into Jerusalem, the rejection (the Greek word implies rejection after trial, *disallowed* as in 1 Pet. ii. 47), the condemnation, the death, the resurrection. It is obvious that if we accept the record as true, the prediction is one which implies a foreknowledge that is at least supernatural, and is so far evidence of a divine mission, if not also of a divine nature, in the speaker. And it may well be urged that in this case the incidents which surround the prediction—as, *e.g.*, Peter's protest, and the rebuke ad-

dressed to him in such striking contrast with the previous promise—have a character of originality and unexpectedness which negatives the hypothesis of its being a prophecy after the event. On the other hand, the fact that the disciples did not take in the meaning of the prediction as to His rising from the dead may, in its turn, be pleaded in bar of the assumption that the prophecy lingered in men's minds, and suggested the belief in a mythical, in the absence of a real, fulfilment. The points peculiar to St. Mark are, (1) that our Lord "spake that saying openly"—the absence of any reticence in this announcement of apparent failure was what startled the disciples; and (2) the graphic touch that as He rebuked Peter, He turned and looked, not on that Apostle only, but on the whole company of the disciples. It is significant that the prediction came when it did, after, and not before, the disciples had, through Peter, made the full confession of their faith. Would that faith be able to stand the test of the apparent failure of which He told them?

⁽³²⁾ **Peter took him, and began to rebuke him.**—It is obvious that the mind of the disciple dwelt on the former, not the latter part of the prediction. The death was plain and terrible to him, but he failed to grasp the idea of the resurrection. The remonstrance would perhaps have been natural

(33) But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter,

saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that

at any time, but the contrast between this prediction and the tone of confidence and triumph in the previous promise, as reported in Matt. xvi. 19, doubtless intensified its vehemence. Personal love for his Lord, his own desire to share in the glory which that promise had implied, were united in his refusal to accept this as the issue towards which they were inevitably tending. St. Matthew (xvi. 22) records the very words of the rebuke, "God be gracious to thee, Lord! this shall not be unto thee;" as though the thought of the Passion was too terrible to be endured even for a moment, and ought to be dismissed as a dark and evil dream.

(33) When he had turned about, and looked on his disciples.—They, we may believe, stood behind, watching the effect of the remonstrance which Peter had uttered as their spokesman, and therefore, the Lord reading their thoughts, the rebuke, though addressed to him, was spoken so that they too might hear.

Get thee behind me, Satan.—The sharpness of the words indicates a strong and intense emotion. The chief of the Apostles was addressed in the self-same terms as those which had been spoken to the Tempter (Matt. iv. 10). It was, indeed, nothing less than a renewal of the same temptation. In Peter's suggestion, that He might gain the crown without the cross, and attain a kingdom of this world as the princes of the world obtain their kingdoms, the Christ saw the

recurrence of the Tempter's offer to give Him the glory of those kingdoms on condition of His drawing back from the path which the Father had appointed for Him, and it was met with the same immediate and energetic repudiation.

Thou savourest not the things that be of God.—The verb, though found in all English versions from Wiclif downwards, and suggested by the *sapis* of the Vulgate, was never a very happy one, and is now so archaic as to be misleading. It may help us to understand it to remember that our *savour* and the French *savoir* are both forms derived from the Latin *sapere*, and that the translators were so far justified in using it to describe a mental state, or rather act. Elsewhere the Greek word is rendered "mind," or "set affection on," as, e.g., "*mind* the things of the flesh," or "of the spirit" (Rom. viii. 5), and "*set your affection* on things above" (Col. iii. 2); and this is obviously a more satisfactory rendering. Peter's sin lay in the fact that his mind was set on the things of earth, its outward pomp and pageantry, measuring the future by a human, not a divine standard.

It is hardly a needless divergence from the work of mere interpretation to suggest that the weakness of Peter has been again and again reproduced in the history of Christendom at large, most conspicuously in the history of the Church which rests its claims on the greatness of the Apostle's name. The annals of the Papacy, from the colossal

be of God, but the things that be of men.

(34) And when he had called the people *unto him* with his disciples also, he

a Matt.
10. 38.

said unto them, Whosoever will come after me,^a let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. (35) For whosoever will

sovereignty, which formed the ideal of Hildebrand, down to the last struggle for temporal power, is but the record of the zeal not according to knowledge of those who "savoured not the things that be of God, but those that be of man." So far as this was so, they were working, though they knew it not, for evil and not for good, even as the chief of the Apostles when he thus became of one mind with the spirit of the world, which is also the spirit of the Tempter, placed himself for the moment on a level with the disciple whom our Lord had hinted at as a "devil," because the seeds of treachery and greed of gain were already working in his soul (John vi. 70). Even a Peter might for a moment be as earthly as a Judas.

(34) And when he had called the people.—The "calling the people," or better, *the multitude*, to hear what involved the apparent failure of His mission announced in the preceding verses is an addition to St. Matthew's narrative. It is confirmed by St. Luke's "He said unto all" (ix. 23), which implies something of the same kind. The teaching as to the unworldliness of His kingdom which the disciples so much needed was to be generalised in its widest possible extent. Those who were following Him, as many did, in idle wonder, or with the desire of earthly greatness, must do so knowing the conditions of His kingdom.

Whosoever will come after me.—The "will" is more than a mere auxiliary; "*willeth*" "desireth" to come after.

Let him deny himself, and take up his cross.—Our common thoughts of "self-denial," i.e., the denial to ourselves of some pleasure or profit, fall far short of the meaning of the Greek. The man is to deny his whole self, all his natural motives and impulses, so far as they come into conflict with the claims of Christ. If he does not so "deny" himself, he is in danger, as Peter was (it is significant that the same word is used in both instances), of "denying" his Lord. The self-denial here commanded has, accordingly, its highest type and pattern in the act by which the Son of God, in becoming man, "emptied Himself" (the true rendering of Phil. ii. 7) of all that constituted, if we may so speak, the "self" of His divine nature. The words "take up his cross," which the disciples had heard before (Matt. x. 38), were now clothed with a new and more distinct meaning, by the words that spoke so clearly of the death of which the cross was to be the instrument.

(35) Whosoever will save his life . . . whosoever shall lose his life . . .—There is a subtle distinction between the two clauses in the Greek which the English fails to represent. "Whosoever *willeth*—i.e., wishes—to save his

save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall

save it. ⁽³⁶⁾ For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? ⁽³⁷⁾ Or

life" (the construction being the same as in verse 24) in the first clause, "Whosoever shall lose his life" in the second. It is as though it was felt that no man could wish to lose his life for the sake of losing it, though he might be ready, if called on, to surrender it. The word rendered "life" is the same as "the soul" of the next verse. For the most part, it means the former rather than the latter with its modern associations, and is never used as a simple equivalent for the *spirit* of man as the heir of immortality. Strictly speaking, it is the animating principle of the natural as distinguished from the spiritual life, and the adjective derived from it is accordingly rendered "natural" in 1 Cor. ii. 14, xv. 44, and "sensual" in James iii. 15. Man, in the fuller trichotomy of St. Paul, consists of "body, soul, and spirit" (1 Thess. v. 23), the soul being the connecting-link between the other two, inclining now towards the one, and now towards the other. The truth, is, of course, put in the form of a paradox, and hence, with a contrast between the two aspects of the soul, or *psyche*. To be bent on saving it in its relation to the body, is to lose it in its relation to the higher life of spirit; to be content to part with it in its lower aspect, is to gain it back again in the higher.

And the gospel's.—In St. Matthew we find simply "for Me." The addition is significant, as show-

ing that though our Lord demanded in the first instance entire personal devotion, it was for Himself as identified with the cause of the good news from God of which He had borne witness and of which He was to be the martyr. (John xviii. 37).

⁽³⁶⁾ What shall it profit a man . . . ?—Many of the better MSS. give "What *doth* it profit?" It is not without a purpose that what may be called the argument of expediency is here brought in. Even the self-denial of verse 24 does not exclude the thought, for those who are still within the range of its influence, of what in the long run will profit us most. There is a self-love which, in spite of the strained language of an exaggerated and unreal philanthropy, is ennobling and not debasing. Looking to the rebuke which had just been addressed to St. Peter, we may, perhaps, trace something like a tone of grave irony in the form of the question. They were thinking of the "profits" of earth, and of time. Had they measured those profits by any true standard of comparison?

His own soul.—Better, *life*, in both verses. The word "lose" is not the same as in verse 35, and had, perhaps, better be rendered *forfeit*, as implying what the other word does not necessarily imply, the idea of a penalty.

⁽³⁷⁾ In exchange for his soul.—The English introduces an apparent antithesis of language (as

what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

(38) Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation;^a of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the

glory of his Father with the holy angels.

A.D. 32

b Matt.
16. 28.
a Matt.
10. 33.

CHAPTER IX.—

(1) And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you,^b That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they

has just been noticed) in place of the identity of the original. It would be better to keep "life" in both verses. If there is no profit in bartering even the lower life for the whole world, how much less in bartering the higher,

"Et propter vitam vivendi perdere causas"

["And for life's sake to lose the end of living."]—(Juvenal, *Sat.* viii. 84.)

And when that forfeiture has been incurred, what price can he who has lost his true life then pay to buy it back again? No. "It costs more to redeem their souls, so that he must let that alone for ever" (Ps. xlix. 8, Prayer Book version).

(38) Whosoever therefore.—Here St. Mark differs from St. Matthew, who omits these words, and agrees, though not quite verbally, with St. Luke. It is obvious that general as the words are, they had a special bearing on those who, like Peter, and probably the other disciples, had shown that they were "ashamed" of the words which had just been spoken, and were not without a prophetic reference to the time when he was first "ashamed" of his Lord, and then denied Him.

This adulterous and sinful generation.—The words are not found in St. Luke's report, but they agree with language which our Lord had used before (Matt. xii. 39; xvi. 4; comp. James iv. 4). Their force here lies in the contrast drawn between those from whose frown or scorn the disciples were now shrinking, between such as the soldiers and maid-servants in the High Priest's palace, and the bright hosts in whose presence the faithless should be put to shame when the Son of Man should come in His glory. They were to look on this picture and on that, and ask themselves which ordeal was the most terrible.

IX.

(1) And he said unto them.—The division of the chapters is obviously wrong. The verse ought to come, as in St. Matthew and St. Luke, in immediate connection with the foregoing discourse. The present arrangement may have been made with a view of connecting it with the Transfiguration, as that which was the fulfilment of the promise; but if so, it was based on what is at least a doubtful interpretation. The form of the words in St. Mark agrees with St. Luke's report, "until they shall see the

have seen the kingdom of God come with power.

(2) And after six days ^{a Matt. 17. 1.}

Jesus taketh *with him* Peter, and James, and John,^a and leadeth them.

kingdom of God," rather than with St. Matthew's "The Son of Man coming in His kingdom."

There be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death . . .—The immediate sequence of the vision of the Son of Man transfigured from the low estate in which he then lived and moved, into the "excellent glory" which met the gaze of the three disciples, has led not a few interpreters to see in that vision the fulfilment of this prediction. A closer scrutiny of the words must, however, lead us to set aside that interpretation, except so far as the Transfiguration bore witness to what had till then been the latent possibilities of His greatness. To speak of something that was to take place within six days as to occur before *some* of those who heard the words should taste of death (comp. John viii. 52, Heb. ii. 9, for the form of the expression) would hardly have been natural; nor does the vision, as such, satisfy the meaning of the words "coming in His kingdom." The solution of the problem is to be found in the great prophecy of Matt. xxiv. In a sense which was real, though partial, the judgment which fell upon the Jewish Church, the destruction of the Holy City and the Temple, the onward march of the Church of Christ, was as the coming of the Son of Man in His kingdom. His people felt that He was not far off from every one of them. He had come to them "in spirit and in power," and that advent was at

once the earnest and the foreshadowing of the "great far-off event," the day and hour of which were hidden from the angels of God, and even from the Son of Man Himself (chap. xiii. 32). The words find their parallel in those that declared that "This generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled" (Matt. xxiv. 34). That such words should have been recorded and published by the Evangelists is a proof either that they accepted that interpretation, if they wrote after the destruction of Jerusalem, or, if we assume that they were led by them to look for the "end of all things" as near at hand, that they wrote before the generation of those who then stood by had passed away; before men had begun to ask, as in 2 Pet. iii. 4, "Where is the promise of His coming?" and so the very difficulty that has perplexed men becomes a proof of the early date of the three Gospels that contain the record.

Come with power.—The Greek verb implies that they should see it not "coming," but as having actually come in its completeness.

(2) **After six days.**—St. Luke's "about eight days" (Luke ix. 28) may be noted as an example of the mode of reckoning which spoke of the interval between our Lord's death and resurrection, about six-and-thirty hours, as three days.

Peter, and James, and John.—The three retain their position, as in the raising of Jairus' daughter, as the elect among the elect. (Comp. also chap. xiii. 3; xiv. 33;

up into an high mountain |

| apart by themselves : and

Matt. xxvi. 37). Looking to the grouping of the Apostles it might have seemed natural that Andrew also should have been there, but his character seems to have been always retiring, and, it may be, was wanting in the intensity of faith which belonged to his brother, the Rock-Apostle, and to the two Sons of Thunder.

Into an high mountain.—A tradition of uncertain date (probably not earlier than the fourth century) fixes on Tabor as the scene of the Transfiguration, but this was probably due to the conspicuous position of that mountain, as it rises abruptly from the plain of Esdraelon. The Gospel narratives leave the locality altogether uncertain, but as Cæsarea Philippi was the last place mentioned, and a journey through Galilee follows (chap. ix. 30), it is more probable that the scene is to be found on one of the heights of Hermon. Tabor, it may be added, was crowned with a fortress, which at this time was likely to be occupied, and this is obviously inconsistent with the solitude which the narrative implies.

And he was transfigured before them.—Elsewhere in the New Testament (with the exception of the parallel, Matt. xvii. 2) the word is used only in its spiritual sense, as in Rom. xii. 2, and is there rendered "transformed." St. Luke does not use the word, but describes the change which it implies, "the fashion of His countenance became other than it had been" (ix. 29). He adds the profoundly significant fact that this was while He was in the act of

prayer. It was in that act of communion with His Father that the divine glory flowed out into visible brightness. Transcendent as the manifestation was, it has its lower analogies in the radiance which made the face of Stephen "as the face of an angel" (Acts vi. 15); yet more in the glory which shone on the face of Moses when he came down from the mount (Ex. xxxiv. 29); in some faint measure, in what may be called the metamorphic power of prayer which invests features that have no form or comeliness with the rapture of devout ecstasy, and adds a fresh beauty even to the face that was before "altogether lovely." And it is no over-bold speculation to see in the fact thus noted that which gives its meaning to the Transfiguration as a stage in the training of the disciples. Prayers like those which were offered for Peter that his "faith might not fail" (Luke xxii. 31, 32) at least suggest something as to the intercession of the Master for His disciples, and this, we must remember, was a crisis in their spiritual history. They had risen to the highest faith; they had been offended by the announcement of His rejection, His sufferings, His death. Something was needed which might sustain their faith, on which they might look back in after years as the earnest of a future glory. It was well for them that they should, at least once in His life of lowliness, gaze on "the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father" (John i. 14), and feel that they were not "following cunningly-devised fables," but had been "eye-witnesses

he was transfigured before them. ⁽³⁾ And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no

fuller on earth can white them. ⁽⁴⁾ And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were

of His majesty" (2 Pet. i. 16). To those who believe that our Lord's human nature was in very deed, sin only excepted, like unto ours, it will not seem over-bold to suggest that for Him too this might have been a time of conflict and of trial, a renewal of the Temptation in the wilderness (see Note on chap. viii. 33), an anticipation of that of the agony of Gethsemane, and that even for Him, in His humanity, there might be in the "excellent glory" and in the "voice from heaven" the help and comfort which strengthened Him for the cross and passion. Following the narrative in its details, we may trace its several stages in some such sequence as follows:—After six days, spent apparently with their Lord in the mountain district near Cæsarea Philippi, but not in the work of preaching or working miracles, the rest of the disciples are left at the foot of the mountain, and the three follow Him, as the evening closes, to its summit. There, as afterwards in Gethsemane, He withdraws from them "about a stone's throw" (Luke xxii. 41), and they "watch with Him," and gaze on Him, as He, standing or kneeling with outstretched arms (the first was, we must remember, the more common attitude of prayer, Luke xviii. 11), intercedes for them and for Israel, and, we may venture to add, for mankind. And then, as they gaze, form and features shine with a new glory, bright as the sun, as though the Shechinah cloud

had wrapt him round. Even His garments are "white as the light," "white as snow" (the reading here is doubtful, but, if genuine, the snows of Hermon, which the disciples may have actually reached, may have suggested the comparison) as St. Mark adds with his usual descriptive vividness, "so as no fuller on earth can white them." Nothing however, it may be added, suggests the vision of three forms floating in the air with which Raffaele's glorious picture has made us familiar.

⁽³⁾ **Shining.**—Better, perhaps, *glittering*.

Exceeding white as snow.

—The two last words are wanting in the best MSS. The comparison of the bright raiment with clothes that had just passed through the fuller's or bleacher's hands, is, in its homely vividness, peculiar to St. Mark.

⁽⁴⁾ **Elias with Moses.**—The identification of the forms which the disciples saw was, we may well believe, intuitive. If we accept the narrative as a whole, it is legitimate to assume that, in the state of consciousness to which they had been raised, they were capable of a spiritual illumination which would reveal to them who they were who were thus recognising their Master's work and doing homage to His majesty. There was, it is obvious, a singular fitness in each case. One was the great representative of the Law, which was a "school-master" or "servant-tutor" (see Gal. iii.

talking with Jesus. ⁽⁵⁾ And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let

us make three tabernacles: one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

⁽⁶⁾ For he wist not what to

24) leading men to Christ, the other of the whole goodly fellowship of the prophets. Of one it had been said that a "Prophet like unto him" should come in the latter days (Deut. xviii. 18), to whom men should hearken; of the other, that he should come again to "turn the hearts of the fathers to the children" (Mal. iv. 5). The close of the ministry of each was not after the "common death of all men." No man knew of the sepulchre of Moses (Deut. xxxiv. 6), and Elijah had passed away in the chariots and horses of fire (2 Kings ii. 11). Both were associated in men's minds with the glory of the kingdom of the Christ (see Notes on chap. vi. 15; ix. 26). Each had shared in the discipline of a forty days' fast (Exod. xxxiv. 28; Kings xix. 8). The Jerusalem Targum on Ex. xii. connects the coming of Moses with that of the Messiah. Another Jewish tradition predicts his appearance with that of Elijah. Their presence now was an attestation that their work was over, and that the Christ had come.

Talking with Jesus.—St. Luke (ix. 31) adds the subject of their communing: "They spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem." So far as the disciples then entered into the meaning of what they heard, or afterwards recalled it, it was a witness that the spirits of the Lawgiver and the Prophet accepted without misgiving, with joy and gladness, the sufferings and the

death which had shaken the faith of the disciples, as the necessary conditions of the Messianic kingdom. It is significant that the word for "decease" (*exodos*) reappears in this sense once only in the New Testament, and then in close connection with St. Peter's reference to the Transfiguration (2 Pet. i. 15).

⁽⁵⁾ **Master, it is good for us to be here.**—St. Mark, after his manner (comp. chaps. v. 41, vii. 34, x. 51, xi. 21), gives the Hebrew "Rabbi" for the "Lord" of St. Matthew, and the "Master" of St. Luke. It is not easy to trace the thoughts that passed rapidly through the soul of the disciple in that moment of amazement. Afterwards—if we may judge from St. Mark's account—"he knew not what to answer, for they were sore afraid," or St. Luke's (ix. 33) "not knowing what he said"—he could hardly explain them himself. We may venture to see in the very *naïveté* of the words a touch of originality and unexpectedness which, as far as it goes, attests the truthfulness of the narrative. What the words seem to imply is:—(1) An abounding joy at being thus brought into a glory which fulfilled the Apostle's brightest hopes, which was so great a contrast to the vision of suffering and death from which he had recoiled. It was, indeed, good to be thus carried, as it were, into Paradise, or the third heaven, and to hear there words which human lips

say; for they were sore afraid. ⁽⁷⁾ And there was a cloud that overshadowed

them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son:

might not reproduce. (2) His thoughts travelled back to the records of the Exodus, when the Lord talked with Moses in the tabernacle (Ex. xxxiii. 7—10). What if like tabernacles could now be made for those three glorious forms, that all Israel might come and gaze, and hear and worship? Would not this be a better consummation than the shame and death at Jerusalem? Would it not meet the belief of the scribes and of the people that "Elias must first come"?

(7) **A cloud that overshadowed them**—i.e., our Lord, Moses, and Elias. To the disciples this would, we cannot doubt, recall the "cloudy pillar" which had descended on the first tabernacle (Ex. xxxiii. 9), the "cloud that filled the house of the Lord" on the dedication of the Temple (1 Kings viii. 10). It was, in later Jewish language, the Shechinah, or abiding presence of Jehovah—the very form of the word connects it with both the Hebrew (*mishkan*) and the Greek (*skené*) words for tabernacle—which was the symbol that He was with His people. The Targums, or Paraphrases, of the Law and Prophets which were then current, had used the word as a synonym for the divine name. Where the Hebrew text had had "I will dwell in thee," the Targum of Jonathan had "I will makemy Shechinah to dwell" (Zech. ii. 10; viii. 3). Its appearance at this moment, followed by the voice out of the cloud, was a witness that no tabernacle made with hands was

now needed, that the humanity of Christ was the true tabernacle of God (comp. John i. 14), and that it was in this sense true that "the tabernacle of God was with men" (Rev. xxi. 3), and that He would dwell with them.

This is my beloved son.

—It will be noted that St. Mark omits the words "in whom I am well pleased," which we find in Matt. xvii. 5, in 2 Pet. i. 17, 18, and in some MSS. of Luke ix. 35. The words were in substance the same as those heard at the baptism of our Lord (see Matt. iii. 17), but the difference in their form is suggestive. Then they were addressed to the human consciousness of the Son of Man, as declaring to Him the greatness of His being. Now they come addressed as to the disciples, and in close connection with the "decease" which was to be accomplished at Jerusalem. It was, if we may so speak, because the Son of Man became obedient unto death (Phil. ii. 8) that He was showing Himself worthy of the Father's love. In the hour of darkness and seeming failure, and agony and death, He was "satisfying" His Father's "good pleasure," and accepted by Him as the one perfect sacrifice. And so the command, "Hear ye Him," gained a new significance. Not the traditions of the elders, or the doctrines of the scribes and Pharisees, not even the teaching of Moses and Elias, of the Law and of the Prophets, but the words of the Son of Man, were henceforth to com-

hear him. ⁽⁸⁾ And suddenly, |
when they had looked round |

| about, they saw no man
| any more, save Jesus only

mand their allegiance, and to be the guide of their faith and of their lives, for of them only it was true that the Father was revealed fully in them (Heb. i. 1, 2), and that they should never pass away (Matt. xxiv. 35).

⁽⁸⁾ They saw no man any more, save Jesus only.—The words, following as they do upon the “Be not afraid,” imply a marked contrast to Peter’s rash utterance. It was *not* “good” for frail men such as they were to tarry long in the immediate glory of the Presence. It was better, far better, to see “Jesus only” with them, as they had been wont to see Him. So in our own lives, moments of spiritual ecstasy are few and far between, and it is good for us that it should be so, and that we should be left to carry the fragrance and power of their memory into the work of our common life, and the light of our common day. If we are faithful to Him, now, as of old, Jesus will still be with us.

It may not be amiss to say a few words as to the credibility of a narrative which is in itself so wonderful, and has been exposed so often to the attacks of a hostile criticism. And (1) it is obvious that what is commonly known as the rationalistic method of interpretation is altogether inapplicable here. The narrative of the Evangelists cannot by any artifice be reduced to a highly-coloured version of some natural phenomenon falling under known laws. No sunset glow or dazzling moonlight could explain the indelible impression made on the minds of the disciples. If accepted at all, it must be accepted as belonging

to the region of the supernatural.

(2) The so-called mythical theory, which sees in such narratives the purely legendary after-growth of the dreaming fancies of a later age, is, of course, possible here, as it is possible wherever the arbitrary criticism which postulates the incredibility of the supernatural chooses to apply it; but it may, at least, be urged against its application in this instance that there was nothing in the Jewish expectations of the Messiah likely to suggest such a legend, and that the circumstances connected with it are such (*e.g.*, its association with our Lord’s sufferings, and the strange, abrupt utterance of Peter) as were hardly likely to suggest themselves either to the popular imagination or to that of an individual mind.

(3) The position which, as has been shown above, it occupies both in our Lord’s ministry and the spiritual training of the disciples, while, on the one hand, it raises the Transfiguration above the region of a mere marvel, is, it may be urged again, such as was not likely to occur to a simple lover of the marvellous. (4) Lastly, the language of John i. 14 and (though with less certainty, owing to the doubt which hangs over the genuineness of that Epistle) of 2 Peter i. 16, may surely be allowed some evidential weight, as being of the nature of allusive reference to a fact which the writers take for granted as generally known. Over and above St. Peter’s direct reference, we note the recurrence of the words “decease,” “tabernacle,” as suggested by it (2 Pet. i. 13, 15).

with themselves. ⁽⁹⁾ And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead. ⁽¹⁰⁾ And they kept that saying with themselves,

questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean.

⁽¹¹⁾ And they asked him, saying, Why say the scribes that Elias must first come?

⁽¹²⁾ And he answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth

⁽⁹⁾ He charged them that they should tell no man.—The command obviously included even the rest of the Apostles within the range of its prohibition. For them, in their lower stage of spiritual growth, the report of the vision at second hand would either have led them to distrust it or to pervert its meaning. Whatever reasons excluded them from being spectators were of still greater weight for the time against their hearing of what had been seen from others. Not till He had passed for ever into the glory of which they had then seen a glimpse, not till the greater marvel had confirmed the less, were they to tell others of what was the most precious moment of their lives.

⁽¹⁰⁾ And they kept that saying with themselves.—We again note what we may describe as a characteristic touch, analysing the mental condition of the disciples in relation to their Master's teaching. The words "rising from the dead" were still simply incomprehensible to them in connection with their expectations of the Messiah's kingdom.

⁽¹¹⁾ And they asked him.—The context clearly implies that the question came not from the disciples at large, but from the

three who had seen the vision, and were brooding over the appearance, and yet more, perhaps, the disappearance, of Elijah, as connected with the tradition of the scribes. If Elijah was to come and prepare the way (Mal. iv. 5), why had he thus come from the unseen world for a moment only?

⁽¹²⁾ **Elias verily cometh first.**—Better, perhaps, *Elias indeed cometh*. Our Lord's words are obviously enigmatic in their form, and, as such, admit of two very different interpretations. Taken literally, as they have been by very many both in earlier and later times, they seem to say that Elijah shall come in person before the yet future day of the Lord, the great second Advent of the Christ. So, it has been argued, the prophecy of Mal. iv. 5 shall yet have a literal fulfilment, and John the Baptist when he confessed that he was not Elijah (John i. 21) was rightly expecting his appearance. It would hardly be right to reject this interpretation merely on the ground of its literalism, or its improbability, or the resemblance which it has to the fantastic belief and practices, which have kept their ground even in modern Judaism, in connection with the expected appearance of the Tishbite, though these, so far as they go,

all things; and how it is written of the Son of man,^a that he must suffer many

^a Isa.
2, &c 53

things, and be set at nought.
(13) But I say unto you,
That Elias is indeed come,

must be thrown into the adverse scale. The words that follow in the next verse are, however, more decisive.

And restoreth all things.—The use of the present tense in St. Mark as compared with the future in St. Matthew is significant, and points to the truth more fully stated in the next verse, that the ministry of the Baptist was, in very deed, an Elias ministry, and that the work of “restoration” was even then going forward. Leaving for the present the question who was to do the work, we turn to the nature of the work itself. Our Lord’s language generalises the description given by Malachi. That work of “turning the hearts of the children to the fathers, and the hearts of the fathers to the children,” was but part of a wider restoration of things and persons. Old truths were to be re-proclaimed, and cleared from the after-growths of traditions. Men who had grown grey in those traditions were to be brought to receive the kingdom of God as little children. The children of the kingdom were to be led to the earlier, simpler faith of the first fathers of Israel. Men, as a race, were to be brought into their right relation to their God and Father. The words seem—at least as interpreted by Acts iii. 21; Rom. viii. 21; Eph. i. 22, 23; 1 Cor. xv. 28, and other like passages—to point forward to a “restitution of all things,” the bringing in of order where now there is disorder and confusion, which shall at last embrace not

Israel only, or even mankind, but the whole universe of God, visible and invisible.

The Son of man, that he must suffer many things.—Another instance of what may be called the new colour which from the time of the Transfiguration spreads over our Lord’s teaching. All is, in one aspect, darker, sadder, more sombre. He is drawing nearer to the cross, and He brings the thought of the cross closer to the minds of the disciples. And yet He teaches them to look beyond that apparent triumph of the powers of evil to the ultimate victory of God, which, indeed, could not otherwise be achieved. Many recent editors recognise, what the form of the Greek indicates, that the words were put as a question: *How has it been written . . . ?* The disciples were left to think over the answer.

(13) **Elias is indeed come.**—These words, the emphatic repetition of what had been said before in Matt. xi. 14, ought, it is believed, to be decisive as to the issue raised by the preceding verse. So far as the prophecy of Malachi required the coming of Elijah, that prophecy had been fulfilled in the Baptist—all unconscious of it as he was, and though men “knew him not” (Matt. xvii. 12)—as coming in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke i. 17). The disciples need not look for any other personal appearance. The use of the present and future tenses in verse 11 points to a deeper truth,

and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him.

⁽¹⁴⁾ And when he came to his disciples, ^ahe saw a great

^a Matt.
17. 14.

multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them. ⁽¹⁵⁾ And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly

which they were to learn afterwards. The Elijah ministry, the work of the preacher of repentance, is not a transient phenomenon belonging to one stage only of the Church's history, but was to be, throughout the ages, on to the end of all things, the indispensable preparation for the coming of the Lord. Only through it could all things be restored, and the path made ready for the heralds of forgiveness and of peace.

And they have done unto him whatsoever they listed.

—Literally, *they did with him whatsoever they would*. To "list," now practically archaic, was the same as "lust," without the special evil sense which has attached to the latter word. It is significant that our Lord charges the guilt of the rejection and death of John upon the scribes and the people at large, with no special reference to the Tetrarch Antipas. The passions and intrigues of the palace were but instruments working out the intent of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

As it is written of him.

—The words are peculiar to St. Mark, and probably point (1) to the special prediction of the coming of Elijah in Mal. iv., and (2) to the parallelism between the career of the Baptist and that of the Tishbite prophet. What had been written of or for the one, the record of bold rebuke and consequent suffering for the Truth, had received its fulfil-

ment in the other. St. Matthew adds (xvii. 13) that "then the disciples understood that He spake unto them of John the Baptist."

⁽¹⁴⁾ **And when he came to his disciples.**—St. Luke states that it was on the next day, the night having apparently been spent on the Mount of Transfiguration. The magic power of the art of Raffaele has brought into vivid juxtaposition the contrast between the scene of glory above and that of trouble and unrest below, but we must not allow the impression made by the picture to distort our thoughts of the history. The two scenes did not synchronise. The vision was at night, and the descent from the mountain would have carried those who made the journey some way at least into the day that followed. The narrative of St. Mark here becomes much the fullest of the three. He alone mentions, *e.g.*, in this verse, the presence of the scribes disputing with the disciples, and in the next, the "running" and the "greeting" with which the multitude received our Lord as He came down from the mountain, and the question in verse 16 as to the cause of the dispute. It is natural to trace, here as elsewhere, the vivid personal reminiscences of St. Peter.

⁽¹⁵⁾ **Were greatly amazed.**—This fact is noted by St. Mark only. We are not told what caused it. Was there some lingering radiance, or some expression of divine joy

amazed, and running to him saluted him. ⁽¹⁶⁾ And he asked the scribes, What question ye with them ?¹

¹ Or, among yourselves ?

⁽¹⁷⁾ And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb

hardly less radiant, that struck the disciples and the people as strangely unlike the sadness that had been shown in recent words and looks ? (chap. viii. 30—33). The verb for "saluted him" is in the imperfect tense (*were saluting*), and probably expresses the fact that as they were greeting him with words of joyous welcome after his night-long absence, He interrupted them with His question.

⁽¹⁶⁾ **He asked the scribes.**—The better MSS. give "asked them," but it seems clear from verse 14 that it was to the scribes, and not to the disciples, that the question was put. He heard their strife of tongues and asked what it meant.

⁽¹⁷⁾ **A dumb spirit.**—This, again, is peculiar to St. Mark, as is also the "gnashing of the teeth" and the "pining" or "withering" in the next verse. The other Gospels add some further touches. The boy was an only child (Luke xvii. 38). He was, as St. Matthew (xvii. 15) describes him, "lunatic," afflicted by that form of madness which was popularly connected with the moon's influence (Matt. iv. 24). When the spirit seized him it "tore him," and he foamed at the mouth, and gnashed with his teeth. Slowly, and as with difficulty, the paroxysm passed off, and the sufferer was wasting away under the violence of the attacks. The phenomena described are, it need hardly be said, those of epilepsy complicated with insanity, a com-

bination common in all countries, and likely to be aggravated where the "seizure," which the very word epilepsy implies, was the work of a mysterious, and, it was believed, supernatural power. A prolonged melancholy, an indescribable look of sadness, sudden falls, and loss of consciousness, with or without convulsions, or passing into a tetanic stiffness, a periodical recurrence coinciding often with the new or full moon (hence, probably, as above, the description of the boy as "lunatic"), grinding the teeth, foaming at the mouth, are all noted by medical writers as symptoms of the disease. The names by which it was known in the earlier stages of medical science were all indicative of the awe with which men looked on it. It was the "divine," the "sacred" disease, as being a direct supernatural infliction. The very word "epilepsy" (= seizure) probably implied the same idea. The Latin synonym, *morbus comitialis*, came from the fact that if a seizure of this kind occurred during the *comitia*, or assemblies of the Roman Republic, it was looked upon as of such evil omen that the meeting was at once broken up, and all business adjourned. Whether there was in this case something more than disease, viz., a distinct possession by a supernatural force, is a question which belongs to the general subject of the "demoniacs" of the Gospel records. (See Matt. viii. 28, and *Excursus* at the end of this Gospel.) Here, at any rate, our

spirit; ⁽¹⁸⁾ and wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: ¹ and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not. ⁽¹⁹⁾ He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how

¹ Or, dasheth him.

long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me. ⁽²⁰⁾ And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. ⁽²¹⁾ And he asked his father, How long is it

Lord's words assume, even more emphatically than elsewhere, the reality of the possession. (See Mark ix. 25.)

⁽¹⁸⁾ **And they could not.**—This, then, would seem to have been the subject-matter of debate. The scribes were taunting the disciples, who had probably trusted to their use of the wonted formula of their Master's name, which they had found sufficient in other cases of less intense suffering (Matt. x. 8; Mark iii. 15; vi. 13), and were now wrangling in their own defence. Neither scribes nor disciples had thought of gaining the spiritual power which might avail, by the means which they both recognised as effective.

⁽¹⁹⁾ **O faithless generation.**—The words were obviously addressed both to the scribes and the disciples. Both had shown their want of the faith which utters itself in prayer to the Father; both were alike "perverse" (Matt. xvii. 17) in finding in the misery brought before them only an occasion of wrangling and debate. This was not the way to obtain the power to heal, and the formulæ of exorcism were but as an idle charm, without the faith of which they were meant to be the expression.

How long shall I suffer you?

—The words are significant as suggesting the thought that our Lord's whole life was one long tolerance of the waywardness and perversity of men, including even that of His disciples. Where he looked, in the prophet's language, for grapes, He found but wild grapes, dulness where He looked for discernment, unbelief where he looked for faith.

Bring him unto me.—St. Mark, whose record is here by far the fullest, relates, it will be seen, what St. Matthew and St. Luke omit, that at this moment "the spirit tare him," and that he "wallowed foaming," in the paroxysm of a fresh convulsion.

⁽²⁰⁾ **He fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming.**—Another graphic touch found only in St. Mark. The last fact is, as is well known, pre-eminently characteristic of the attacks of epilepsy. The old English word "wallow" (=to roll to and fro, as in 2 Pet. ii. 22), exactly expresses the convulsive movement of such seizures.

⁽²¹⁾ **And he asked his father.**—The question, asked as if to bring into strong relief the chronic, and therefore seemingly hopeless, character of the possession, is peculiar

ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. ⁽²²⁾ And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us. ⁽²³⁾ Jesus said unto

him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. ⁽²⁴⁾ And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. ⁽²⁵⁾ When Jesus saw that the people came run-

to this Gospel, as is the circumstantial account of the falling oftentimes "into the fire and into the waters." (The Greek is plural.) Here, again, the phenomena are essentially epileptic; beginning, as that disease commonly does, about the age of puberty, and recurring, without a moment's notice, after short intervals, depriving the sufferer of all power of self-protection.

⁽²²⁾ **If thou canst do any thing.**—The words are spoken almost in the accents of despair. Could He, the Master, prevail where the disciples had failed?

⁽²³⁾ **If thou canst believe.**—The better MSS. omit the word "believe," and insert the definite article before "if thou canst," and the sentence thus modified is taken as expressing the sadness of surprise. Our Lord repeats the half-believing, half-despairing words of the father in a tone of sadness, "*If thou canst . . . !*" Was this the way in which a man should speak who came to Him as a Healer? Such a one had to learn the great primary lesson that "all things were possible to him that believeth," that the secret of previous failure lay, in part at least, in his own want of faith, as well as in that of the scribes

and disciples who had tried their arts of exorcism in vain.

⁽²⁴⁾ **And straightway the father of the child . . .**—The whole verse is peculiar to St. Mark. The better MSS. omit "with tears," which was probably added by some transcriber as an embellishment. The answer of the father shows that the conflict between faith and unfaith was still continuing; but the relative position of the two had altered for the better, and the former was beginning to prevail. The sense that he needed help in that conflict was in itself an act of faith. For Christ to come to the help of unbelief struggling to believe was to turn the conflict into victory. The prayer of the disciples, "Lord, increase our faith," may be noticed as substantially identical with that of the father of the demoniac (Luke xvii. 5).

⁽²⁵⁾ **When Jesus saw that the people came running together.**—This fact and the words of the rebuke to the "deaf and dumb spirit" are found only in St. Mark. For "foul," better, *unclean*, as elsewhere throughout the New Testament. It would seem as if the crowd had instinctively drawn back from the boy's convulsive agony, as he rolled foaming or

ning together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, *Thou* dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. ⁽²⁶⁾ And *the*

spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him : and he was as one dead ; in-
somuch that many said, He is dead. ⁽²⁷⁾ But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted

the ground, and began to draw near as they saw the calmness of Jesus, and heard the words "All things are possible." The rush of the crowd may, perhaps, be thought of as accelerating our Lord's action. It was well that both the suffering boy and his father should be delivered from that tumult as speedily as possible.

Enter no more into him.—We may note in these words, used by our Lord in this case only, a tender adaptation to the weak faith of the father. He had seen so many relapses, the last state worse than the first, that it was hard for him to take in the thought that the cure would be complete and permanent. It would seem, from the parable of the Unclean Spirit in Matt. xii. 43—45, that the apparent cures wrought by popular exorcists were often followed by a relapse of this nature.

⁽²⁶⁾ **Rent him sore.**—The verb is the same as the "tare him" of verse 20, and implies a spasm, as of horror, convulsing the whole frame. The corpse-like falling as one dead, and the cry of many (better, "*the many*"—i.e., "*the greater part, most of them*") that he was dead, and our Lord's taking the boy by the hand, and the question of the disciples, are all peculiar to St. Mark. Thus it was that the work of healing was accomplished. Calmness, and peace, and self-possession were seen instead of the

convulsive agony. The spiritual power of the Healer had overcome the force, whether morbid or demoniac, which was the cause of his sufferings. Our Lord's words, it need hardly be said, assume it to have been the latter ; and those who deny the reality of the possession must, in their turn, assume either that He shared the belief of the people, or accepted it because they were not able to receive any other explanation of the mysterious sufferings which they had witnessed. Each hypothesis presents difficulties of its own, and we may well be content to confess our inability to solve them. (See Note on chap. v. 2, and *Excursus* at the end of this volume.) Speaking generally, the language of the New Testament seems to recognise, if not in all diseases, yet at least in all that disturb the moral equilibrium of man's nature, an infraction of the divine order, and therefore rightly sees in them the work, directly or indirectly, of the great Antagonist of that order. (Compare Luke xiii. 16 ; 2 Corinthians xii. 7.) All our Lord's works of mercy are summed up by St. Peter in the words that "He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil" (Acts x. 38), and on this supposition the particular phenomena of each case of disease, as well as those which were commonly known as

him up; and he arose.

⁽²⁸⁾ And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out?

⁽²⁹⁾ And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.

⁽³⁰⁾ And they departed

cases of "possession," were logically ascribed to demoniac forces.

Into the house.—The Greek has no article, but it would probably be wrong to render the words "into a house." The phrase being adverbial for "going home," as in the French *chez lui*.

⁽²⁸⁾ **Why could not we cast him out?**—The question came obviously from the disciples who had been left below when our Lord went apart with Peter, James, and John, to the Mount of the Transfiguration. They did not even now see the reason of their failure. They had dealt with this case as they had dealt with others, had uttered the name of the Lord Jesus as an all-prevailing charm. Why had they not met with a like issue? They did not as yet perceive that they came under our Lord's language of rebuke, and did not look on themselves as belonging to the "faithless generation."

⁽²⁹⁾ **This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.**—The words imply degrees in the intensity of the forms of evil ascribed to demons amounting to a generic difference. Some might yield before the energy of a human will, and the power of the divine Name, and the prayers even of a weak faith. Some, like that which comes before us here, required a greater intensity of the spiritual life, to be gained by the "prayer and fasting" of which our Lord speaks, even as analogous

phenomena of mental or spiritual disorder at all times make a greater demand on the power of the higher will which such a discipline strengthens. The circumstances of the case render it probable that our Lord himself had fulfilled both the conditions. That night on the Mount of Transfiguration had been spent in prayer (Luke ix. 29), and had been followed by no morning meal, and our Lord's words in John xi. 41 imply that prayer, spoken or unspoken, was the very law of our Lord's life, and the freely accepted condition of the exercise of His supernatural powers. The disciples, we know, did not as yet fast (Matt. ix. 14, 15), and the facts imply that they had been weak and remiss in prayer. The words are noticeable as testifying to the real ground and motive for "fasting," and to the gain for the higher life to be obtained, when it is accompanied by true prayer, by this act of conquest over the lower nature. So St. Peter's vision (Acts x. 9, 10), and the appointment of Paul and Barnabas by the direct guidance of the Spirit (Acts xiii. 2), are both connected with fasting. And St. Paul, besides the "hunger and thirst" that came upon him as the incidents of his mission-work, speaks of himself as "in fastings often" (2 Cor. xi 27).

It has to be noted, however, that in St. Mark's report, some of the better MSS. omit the last two words. It is possible that they

thence, and passed through Galilee; and he would not that any man should know it. ⁽³¹⁾ For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men,^a and they shall kill

^a Matt.
17. 22.
^b Matt.
18. 1.

him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day. ⁽³²⁾ But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him.

⁽³³⁾ And he came to Capernaum:^b and being in the

may have been added, like the "tears" of verse 24, to strengthen the words actually spoken, by bringing in what had been found to convey a new intensity of spiritual volition, and therefore of power to rescue human souls from the frenzy and despair into which they had been plunged by the unclean spirits that possessed them. A like addition of "fasting" to prayer, apparently from a like ascetic tendency, is found in the later MSS. of 1 Cor. vii. 5. In St. Matthew both words are found, but some of the most ancient MSS. omit the whole verse. On the whole, however, there is a balance of evidence in their favour; and, as shown in Matt. xvii. 21, what they teach is in harmony with other portions of the teaching both of our Lord and His Apostles.

And passed through Galilee.—St. Matthew's phrase (xvii. 22), *as they were moving to and fro*, indicates the character of these wanderings. The journeyings were apparently, like that to the coasts of Tyro and Sidon (Matt. xv. 21), unconnected with the work of Our Lord's ministry. He was still, as before, taking His disciples apart by themselves, and training them by fuller disclosures of His coming passion and of the Resurrection that should follow.

"He would not that any man should know" of their presence, for at that crisis, as was shown only too plainly by what followed, their minds were in a state of feverish excitement, which needed to be controlled and calmed. St. Luke adds (Luke ix. 44) the solemn words with which this second announcement of His death was impressed on their thoughts, "Let these sayings sink down into your ears" (literally, *place these things*). The substance of what they heard was the same as before, but its repetition gave it a new force, as showing that it was not a mere foreboding of disaster, passing away with the mood of sadness in which it might have seemed to originate.

⁽³²⁾ **They understood not that saying.**—Literally, *they knew not the saying*. The words, giving once more a kind of psychological analysis of the disciples' thoughts, are not in St. Matthew, but are found in St. Luke, who adds, with his characteristic tendency to analyse such states of mind, that "it was hidden or *veiled* from them." They imply the continuance of the perplexity described in verse 10.

⁽³³⁾ **And he came to Capernaum.**—The better MSS. give "*they came*." The arrival at Capernaum is given by St. Matthew in

house he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way? ⁽³⁴⁾ But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who *should be* the greatest. ⁽³⁵⁾ And he

sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, *the same* shall be last of all, and servant of all. ⁽³⁶⁾ And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when

connection with the narrative of the *didrachma* or tribute money, which in his Gospel immediately precedes that now before us. St. Mark alone records the previous dispute of the disciples, and the question which brought that dispute as into the light of day.

And being in the house.—

The use of the article suggests the conclusion that the house was one to which our Lord habitually resorted, and, if so, there is a strong probability that it was the abode of Peter and Andrew (chap. i. 29).

He asked them. . . .—The disciples apparently flattered themselves that their dispute had escaped their Master's notice. They were made to feel, by the form of the question, that they were in the presence of One who read the very thoughts of their hearts; and they *were silent*, and shrank from answering it.

⁽³⁴⁾ **Who should be the greatest.**—Better, more simply, *who was the greatest*. St. Mark records the incident more fully than St. Matthew or St. Luke. We may well believe that the promise made to Peter, and the special choice of the Three for closer converse, as in the recent Transfiguration, had given occasion for the rival claims which thus asserted themselves. Those

who were less distinguished looked on this preference, it may be, with jealousy, while, within the narrower circle, the ambition of the two sons of Zebedee to sit on their Lord's right hand and on His left in His kingdom (Matt. xx. 23), was probably ill-disposed to concede the primacy of Peter.

⁽³⁵⁾ **And he sat down, and called the twelve.**—The attitude was not without significance. He sat, as about to teach, and the lesson which He gave was one of more than usual solemnity.

If any man desire to be first. . . .—The words assert a twofold law: (1) that the desire to be first defeats itself; and (2) that the only path to sovereignty is through humility, and that the one varies as the other.

⁽³⁶⁾ **And he took a child.**—As the conversation was "in the house" (Mark ix. 33), and that house probably was Peter's, the child may have been one of his. As in other like incidents (chap. x. 10; Matt. xix. 13; xxi. 15, 16), we may recognise in our Lord's act a recognition of the special beauty of childhood, a tender love for the gracious trust and freedom from rivalry which it shows when, as yet, the taint of egotism is undeveloped. St. Mark adds that in the presence of the Twelve,

he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them,

⁽³⁷⁾ Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me,

^a Luke
2. 49.

receiveth not me, but him that sent me.

⁽³⁸⁾ And John answered him,^a saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he fol-

whom He summoned, as it were, for the sight, He folded His arms round the child as in loving fondness, and before He did so, uttered the warning words, "If any one will (*wishes to*) be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all." A late tradition of the Eastern Church identified the child with Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, taking the name which he gave himself as passive, Θεοφόρος (*Theophoros*), "one who had been carried or borne by God." Ignatius himself, however, uses it in its active sense, "one who carries God within him." (*Martyr. Ignat.*, c. 2.)

When he had taken him in his arms.—Better, perhaps, *when He had embraced him*. The act is expressed in the Greek by a single participle which occurs only here and in chap. x. 16. It may mean either that the child was taken up in our Lord's arms, or that the arms were folded round him. The latter is somewhat the more probable.

⁽³⁷⁾ Whosoever shall receive.—St. Mark omits part of what St. Matthew records, "Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself . . .," and with St. Luke, adds the last clause, "Whosoever shall receive Me . . ." The climax carries the truth to its completion. When we love a little child in the name of Christ, *i.e.*, for His sake, and after His manner, not for the beauty or outward grace of childhood, but because we recognise in

it the infinite promise and potency of an eternal life, as of one who is an heir of the Kingdom, we are sharers in His spirit, and when we love or receive Him who was one with the Father, we enter into fellowship with Him who is the Supreme and Eternal Love. (Comp. John xiv. 10, 23.) It would not be too bold to say, that the true Christ-like love of children varies as the child's need and sufferings vary, and prefers the child of the gutter in its rags to that of the palace in its soft and delicate apparel.

⁽³⁸⁾ And John answered him.—The incident that follows, omitted by St. Matthew, is recorded by St. Luke in the same connection. It indicates something of the same zeal as that which desired that fire might come from heaven to consume the Samaritans who refused to receive our Lord (Luke ix. 52). The words were so far an "answer" to what our Lord had said, that they were suggested by it. The disciple desired apparently to show, as in self-vindication, that he not only "received" his Master, but that he was unwilling to "receive" any who did not openly follow Him as a disciple. The fact of which he speaks is significant historically as indicating that one of the effects of our Lord's work had been to stir up and quicken the spiritual powers of men outside the range of the company of disciples that gathered round Him. They believed in

loweth not us : and we forbid him, because he followeth not us. ⁽³⁹⁾ But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name,^a that can lightly

^a 1 Cor.
12. 3.
^b Matt.
10. 42.

speaking evil of me. ⁽⁴⁰⁾ For he that is not against us is on our part. ⁽⁴¹⁾ For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name,^b because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto

Him, or they would not have used His Name. They were fellow-workers with Him, for they were seeking to rescue the souls of men from frenzy and despair. Their faith was effective, for, as the narrative implies, they not only claimed the power to cast out demons, but did cast them out. The case stood, it is obvious, on an entirely different footing from that of the sons of Sceva, in Acts xix. 13, 14, or of the exorcist who practised his art before Vespasian (Joseph. *Ant.* viii. 3, § 5), which at first sight seem to resemble it. They were "vagabond exorcists," preying upon the credulity of their dupes. Here we have to deal with the earnestness and reality of faith.

We forbade him.—The Greek *tense* (the imperfect) implies, perhaps, that they had tried to stop him, but had not succeeded.

⁽³⁹⁾ **A miracle.**—Better, *a mighty work, or work of power.*

Lightly.—Literally, *quickly.* The word for "speaking evil," the opposite of blessing (*bene-dicere*), is rendered "curse" in chap. vi. 10 and Matt. xv. 4. The words are wide-reaching in their range. The true disciples of Christ are to hinder no one who is really doing His work. The very fact that they do it will bring with it reverence and sympathy. They will not quickly be found among

those who speak evil of the Son of Man. So of old, Moses answered the prayer of Joshua that he would forbid Eldad and Medad to prophesy in the camp, "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets" (Num. xi. 29). So St. Paul rejoiced that every way Christ was preached (Phil. i. 18). So too often have churches and their teachers *not* acted when men were doing the work of Christ, combating evil, relieving wants, in ways more or less irregular, or with a creed more or less imperfect. In all such cases we need to remember the words "Forbid him not . . . he that is not against us is on our side." This, and the other axiom, which presents the opposite pole of the same truth, "He that is not with Me is against Me" (Matt. xii. 30), form, as Bacon has well said, "the cross clauses of the league of Christians" (Essay III., *Of Unity in Religion*).

⁽⁴¹⁾ **Whosoever shall give you a cup of water.**—The reproduction of the promise of Matt. x. 42 in so different a context is significant as an instance of our Lord's method of teaching, reiterating words of blessing and of wisdom till they were engraved indelibly on the minds of those who heard them. He would not disregard even the cup of cold water given to the humblest disciple as

you, he shall not lose his reward. ⁽⁴²⁾ And whosoever shall offend one of

^a Matt. 18. 6.

these little ones that believe in me,^a it is better for him that a millstone were

such and for the sake of Christ. Taken by themselves, the words do not go beyond this; but the language of Matt. xxv. 40 justifies their extension to every act of kindness done to any man in the name of that humanity which He shares with those whom He is not ashamed to call His brethren (Heb. ii. 11). (Comp. like instances of this method in Matt. vii. 1; Mark iv. 24; Luke vi. 38; and again in Matt. x. 24; Luke vi. 40; John xii. 16; xv. 20). In this context there is, perhaps, a latent *à fortiori* argument. If the cup of cold water would not be disregarded (we think, as we read the words of the dying act of Sir Philip Sydney on the field of Zutphen) much more should the nobler work of casting out devils receive its due reward.

⁽⁴²⁾ Whosoever shall offend.—The verbal, or all but verbal, reproduction of these verses from Matt. xviii. 6—9, indicates both the impression which their repetition had made on the disciples, and the stress which our Lord laid on the axiom so repeated. It may be noted, however, that St. Mark omits the “Woe unto the world because of offences . . .,” which we find in St. Matthew, and that the emphatic thrice-repeated words, “Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched,” are found only in St. Mark. It should be noted, however, that in verses 43 and 45 the words “into the fire that never shall be quenched” are omitted in some of the best MSS., and that the same MSS., and others, omit

both verses 44 and 46, leaving verse 48 to stand as the only full description of Gehenna.

One of these little ones.—The term was familiarly used of the scholars of a Rabbi, and in this sense our Lord, as the great Master, sending forth His disciples, now employs it. Possibly the words may point specially to such “little ones,” the lambs of the flock, as the child around whom, it may be, His arms were still folded. The true meaning of “offend,” as “ensnaring” or “causing to stumble and fall,” must not be lost sight of. Some of the better MSS. give *these little ones that have faith*.

That a millstone were hanged about his neck.—The adjective connected with, equivalent to “great,” “millstone” indicates the large stone-mill, in working which an ass was commonly employed, as distinguished from the smaller handmill of Luke xvii. 35. The punishment was not recognised in the Jewish law, but it was in occasional use among the Greeks (Diod. Sic., xvi. 35), and had been inflicted by Augustus (Sueton. *Aug.*, lxvii.) in cases of special infamy. Jerome states in a Note on Matt. xviii. 6, that it was practised in Galilee; and it is not improbable that the Romans had inflicted it on some of the ringleaders of the insurrection headed by Judas of Galilee. Our Lord’s words, on this assumption, would come home with a special vividness to the minds of those who heard them. The infamy of offending one of the little ones was as

hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.

(43) And^a if thy hand offend

^a Matt. 5.
29, & 18.
8.
1 Or.
cause
thee to
offend.

thee,¹ cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two

great as that of those whose crimes brought upon them this exceptional punishment, which, as depriving the dead of all the reverent honours which men loved to lavish on them, was to the Jew especially horrible. It were a nobler thing to share the infamy of that punishment than that of the guilt of which the Master spoke.

(43) If thy hand offend thee.

—The Greek verb means strictly, as stated above, to cause another to stumble or fall into a snare, and this was probably the sense in which the translators used the word "offend." It is doubtful, however, whether it ever had this sense in English outside the Authorised version, and the common use of the word gives so different a meaning that it cannot in any way be regarded as a happy rendering. The difficulty of finding an equivalent is shown by the variations in the successive English versions: "offend," in Tyndal's; "hinder thee," in Cranmer's; "cause thee to offend," in the Geneva; "scandalise," in the Rhemish; "offend," again in the Authorised version. Of these the Geneva is, beyond doubt, the best.

Into hell.—Literally, *Gehenna*. Great confusion has arisen here and elsewhere from the use of the same English word for two Greek words of very different meanings: (1) *Hades*, answering to the *Sheol* (also for the most part translated "hell") of the Old Testament, the unseen world, the region or state of the dead, without any reference to their

blessedness or misery, as in Luke xvi. 23; Acts ii. 27; Rev. i. 18; xx. 13. (2) *Gehenna*, which had come to represent among the later Jews (not in the time of any Old Testament writer) the place of future punishment. The history of the word is worth studying. Originally, it was the Greek form of *Ge-hinnom* (the valley of Hinnom, sometimes of the "son" or the "children" of Hinnom), and was applied to a narrow gorge on the south of Jerusalem (Josh. xv. 8). There Solomon erected a high place for Molech (1 Kings xi. 7). There the fires of that god had received their bloody offerings of infant sacrifice under Ahaz and Manasseh (2 Kings xvi. 3; 2 Chron. xxviii. 3; xxxiii. 6). Josiah, in his great work of reformation, defiled it, probably by casting the bones of the dead and other filth upon it (2 Kings xxiii. 10—14); and the Jews on their return from captivity showed their abhorrence of the idolatry of their fathers by making it, as it were, the place where they cast out all the refuse of the city. Outwardly, it must have been foul to sight and smell, and thus it became, before our Lord's time, a parable of the final state of those in whom all has become vile and refuse. The thought first appears in the Targum or Paraphrase of Isa. xxxiii. 14 ("Gehenna is the eternal fire"). It is often said that fires which were kept burning to consume the solid refuse added to the horror of the scene; but of this, though it is suggested by this

<p>hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: ⁽⁴⁴⁾ where their</p>	<p>a Is. 66. 24.</p>	<p>worm dieth not,^a and the fire is not quenched. ⁽⁴⁵⁾ And if thy foot offend thee, cut</p>
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passage and Matt. v. 22, there is no adequate evidence. Here the analogy of the previous verse suggests also the thought that the bodies of great criminals were sometimes deprived of burial rites, and cast out into the Valley of Hinnom; but of this, too, there is no evidence, though it is in itself probable enough. In any case, the meaning of the clause is obvious. The sins into which we are led by eye or hand, organs of perception or instruments of action, are subject to the judgment of the Eternal Judge, and may bring us into a guilt and a penalty like that of the vilest criminals. It is better to sacrifice the perception, say, of outward beauty, or the power of effective action, than to incur that fearful doom. The very form of the words excludes a literal interpretation. No spiritual change for good is wrought by bodily mutilation, whether it be the self-inflicted loss of eye or hand, or like that ascribed to Origen.

⁽⁴⁴⁾ **Where their worm dieth not.**—The words are taken almost *literatim* from the closing verse of Isaiah lxvi. 24), where they appear as part of the description of the triumph of Jehovah. The true worshippers should serve in His Temple continually, and they should go forth and see the carcasses of the transgressors, "for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh." The scenery is, like that of Isa. lxiii. 1—6, drawn from the slaughter of earthly bat-

tlés, and the prophet exults in vision over the putrid carcasses and the blazing fires that consume them, and thinks of that scene as perpetuated throughout eternity. The imagery was thus already familiar, and it coalesced naturally with the ideas of Gehenna. Possibly the valley of Hinnom, as the great *cloaca* of Jerusalem, receiving its solid as well as its fluid sewage, with putrid offal and blazing fires consuming them, had become in its way, as suggested above, a visible type of the unseen Gehenna; but the authorities are hardly definite enough to warrant the positive statement that it presented such a scene. The interpretation of the symbols (for a literal acceptance of the words is obviously out of the question) is not far to seek. Well-nigh all Christian thinkers have seen in the gnawing worm, the anguish of an endless remorse, the indelible, haunting memory of past sins. Fire retains its wonted force as the expression of the righteousness of God (Heb. xii. 29) manifesting itself to the consciousness of the sinner in all its awfulness, purifying where there is any desire, and therefore capacity, for purification, but never altering its essential character, even as the fire "never can be quenched." So much the words declare distinctly, as the law of righteous retribution. They do not absolutely exclude the thought that the fire may consume or destroy, in the sense of annihilating, that which it cannot purify;

it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: ⁽⁴⁶⁾ where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. ⁽⁴⁷⁾ And if thine eye offend thee,¹ pluck it

¹ Or, *cause thee to offend.*

out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: ⁽⁴⁸⁾ where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. ⁽⁴⁹⁾ For every one shall be salted with fire,

still less do they affirm that it will.

⁽⁴⁷⁾ **And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out.**—The bold severity of the phrase excludes, as before, a literal interpretation. The seat of the evil lies in the will, not in the organ of sense or action, and the removal of the instrument might leave the inward taint unpurified. What is meant is, that any sense, when it ministers to sin is an evil and not a good, the loss of which would be the truest gain. Translated into modern language, we are warned that there is a danger that taste, culture, æsthetic refinement may but make our guilt and our punishment more tremendous. It were better to be without them altogether than that they should minister to impurity or baseness in ourselves or others.

It is better.—The element of prudential self-love, of a calculation of profit and loss, is, as we have seen in chap. viii. 36, not excluded from Christian motives. As addressed to a nation immersed in the pursuit of gain, it conveys the stern, half-ironical, yet pertinent, warning—"If you must think of profit, make your calculations wisely." Here, however, the Greek word for "better" (= *good*, in the sense of *noble*) suggests the thought of an ideal good-

ness taken as a standard, rather than of such a calculation.

⁽⁴⁹⁾ **Every one shall be salted with fire.**—The verse presents considerable difficulties, both as regards the reading and the interpretation. Some of the best MSS. omit the first clause; two of the best (the Vatican and Sinaitic) omit the second. It is as if transcribers felt that either clause was more intelligible by itself than the two taken together. Accepting both clauses as, on the whole, sufficiently authenticated, we have to deal with their meaning. (1) The most generally received interpretation of the first clause is that which eliminates from the process of salting the idea of purifying, or preserving from corruption, and sees in it only the symbol of perpetuation. So taken, the words become an emphatic assertion of the endlessness of future punishment—as in Keble's lines:

"Salted with fire, they seem to show
How spirits lost in endless woe
May undecaying live."

Against this, however, it may be urged (*a*) that it arbitrarily limits the "every one" of the sentence to those who are finally condemned and are cast into Gehenna; (*b*) that it is scarcely conceivable that the

and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.^a ⁽⁵⁰⁾ Salt is good:^b but if the salt have lost his saltness, where-

^a Lev. 2
13.
^b Matt.
5. 13.

with will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.

same word, "salted," should be used in such contrasted senses in the same verse; (c) that the uniform symbolism of "salt," as representing the spiritual element that purifies and preserves from taint (see Matt. v. 13; Luke xiv. 34; Col. iv. 6; Lev. ii. 13), is against this application of it. We have to ask whether "fire" appears with a like symbolism and with an application as universal as that of this verse. And the answer is found partly in "the baptism with the Holy Ghost and with fire," of which the Baptist spoke (Matt. iii. 11); the "fire already kindled" of our Lord's teaching (Luke xii. 49); the "fire" which "shall try every man's work of what sort it is" of 1 Cor. iii. 13; the "fire that tries men's faith" of 1 Pet. i. 7. In these passages there can be no shadow of doubt that "fire" represents, as in verse 44 and Heb. xii. 29, the righteousness of God manifested as punishing and chastising—the discipline, in other words, of suffering. Of that discipline, our Lord says "every one" shall be a partaker. He shall thus be "salted with fire," for the tendency of that fire, the aim of the sufferings which it represents, is to purify and cleanse. Even when manifested in its most awful forms, it is still true that they who "walk righteously and speak uprightly" may dwell with "everlasting burnings"—i.e., with the perfect and consuming holiness of God (Isa. xxxiii. 14). (2) The second clause

is obviously far simpler. The "sacrifice" throws us back upon the ritual of Lev. ii. 13, which prescribed that salt should be added, as the natural symbol of incorruption, to every sacrifice. Here our Lord speaks of the spiritual sacrifice which each man offers of his body, soul, and spirit (Rom. xii. 1), and declares that "salt," the purifying grace of the Eternal Spirit, is needed that it may be acceptable. Punishment, the pain which we feel when brought into contact with the infinite Righteousness represented by fire, may do its work in part; but it requires something more for completeness. The sacrifice must be "salted with salt," as well as with "fire." To use another figure, there must be the baptism of the Holy Ghost, as well as that of fire (Matt. iii. 11).

⁽⁵⁰⁾ **Salt is good.**—The general reference to this antiseptic action of salt is (as in Col. iv. 6, and possibly in the symbolic act of Elisha, 2 Kings ii. 21) enough to give an adequate meaning to the words, but the special reference to the symbolic use of salt in the word "sacrifice" makes it all but certain that our Lord meant to direct the thoughts of the disciples to the truth that they were to live, each one of them, as offering the daily sacrifice of body, soul, and spirit purified from all that defiles them.

If the salt have lost its saltness.—The salt commonly used by the Jews of old, as now.

CHAPTER X.—

(1) And he arose from thence,^a and cometh into the coasts of Judæa by the farther side of Jordan: and the people resort unto him

A.D. 33.

a Matt.
19. 1.

again; and, as he was wont, he taught them again.

(2) And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away *his* wife?

came from *Jebel-Usdum*, on the shores of the Dead Sea, and was known as the Salt of Sodom. Maundrell, the Eastern traveller (circ. A.D. 1690), reports that he found lumps of rock-salt there which had become partially flavourless, but I am not aware that this has been confirmed by recent travellers. Common salt, as is well known, will melt if exposed to moisture, but does not lose its saltiness. The question is more curious than important, and does not affect the ideal case represented in our Lord's words. Here again we note the reproduction of words previously uttered, as in Matt. v. 13, in a different context.

Wherewith will ye season it?—The words imply a relative if not an absolute impossibility. If gifts, graces, blessings, a high calling, and a high work fail, what remains? The parable finds its interpretation in Heb. vi. 1—6, but we need to remember that here, as elsewhere, "the things that are impossible with men are possible with God" (Matt. xix. 26). Even the lost purity may be restored by the supernatural gift.

Have salt in yourselves.—The words that follow, "have peace in yourselves," seem to refer to the contention in verse 33, with which this portion of our Lord's teaching had begun. The purity from selfish aims, which was symbolised by the "salt," was the chief

or only preservative of peace. (Comp Col. iv. 6).

X.

(1) **And he arose from thence.**

—We may note, as some help to a right study of the Gospel narrative, that the best harmonists place Matt. xviii. 15—35, Luke x. 1, xvii. 10 (with the exception of xv. 3—7), and John vii. 1, xi. 54, between the 9th and 10th chapters of this Gospel. We have accordingly to think of the interval between them as filled up by our Lord's visit to Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles (John vii. 2), by the mission and return of the Seventy (Luke x. 1, 17), by a visit to Bethany (Luke x. 38), and by journeyings to and fro on the east side of Jordan, by another visit to Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles (John x. 22), and, possibly, by the raising of Lazarus (John xi.) (See, however, Note on verse 17.) The "farther side of Jordan" implies what is known as the Peræan ministry of our Lord, of which our only record is given by St. Luke.

Resort unto him.—Literally, *come together, or journey together.*

(2) **Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife?**—The question was one then much debated among the Jewish scribes and casuists. The stricter school of Shammai held that the *vinculum* of marriage was indissoluble, except on the ground of the wife's adultery,

tempting him. ⁽³⁾ And he answered and said unto

them, What did Moses command you? ⁽⁴⁾ And

and then it was dissolved *ipso facto* by the penalty of death inflicted on her (Deut. xxii. 22, John viii. 4). The laxer school of Hillel took its stand on Deut. xxiv. 1, and gave a wide latitude to the word "uncleanness," so as to include almost anything that the husband might not like, even to the bad cooking of his dinner. So far as the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount had become known, it gave a sufficiently clear answer to the inquiry of the Pharisees. It is, however, quite conceivable that it had not reached the ears of those who now put the question, or, that if it had, they wished to test His consistency, and to see whether on this point He still held with the stricter rule of Sham-mai, and not, as he did on the Sabbath question, with the laxer rule of Hillel. If the narrative of the woman taken in adultery in John viii. 1—11 be rightly placed, that might have given rise to doubts and rumours. Would He who dealt so pitifully with the adulteress have sanctioned divorce even in that case, or pronounced the marriage bond absolutely indissoluble? Or was His apparent tolerance of that offender indicative of a lower standard as to the obligations of marriage? In any case, they might hope to bring Him, as in the entrapping question about paying tribute to Cæsar (chap. xii. 14), into conflict either with the stricter or the more popular school of casuists. An illustration of what has been stated above may be found in the fact that the Jewish historian Josephus records how he had divorced two wives on grounds comparatively

trivial (*Life*, c. 75, 76), and speaks incidentally in his history of "many causes of all kinds" as justifying separation (*Ant.* iv. 8, § 23. *Comp.* *Ecclus.* xxv. 26). We do not know on what grounds Herod Antipas had divorced the daughter of Aretas, but it is probable enough that here, as afterwards, the Herodian party were working with the Pharisees. Here, in Peræa, they might count, either on the Teacher shrinking from expressing His convictions, or so uttering them as to provoke the Tetrarch's wrath, as the Baptist had done. In either case, a point would have been gained against Him.

⁽³⁾ **What did Moses command?**—The question (which St. Matthew omits) seems to have been put in order to draw out the contrast between the letter and the spirit of the law. In St. Matthew's report, the Pharisees bring the letter as an objection to our Lord's assertion of the principle. The permission to which the Pharisees refer is found in Deut. xxiv. 1, and had, as stated above, been very differently interpreted. The only limitation imposed was, that the step once taken was to be inevitable. The woman was not in any case, after a second marriage, to return to cohabitation with her first husband. To have permitted that, once and again, would have reduced marriage almost to the level of prostitution.

⁽⁴⁾ **And they said . . .**—The true answer to the question, our Lord teaches, is found not in the words of a code of laws, but in the original facts of creation. These represented the idea of man

they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put *her* away.

⁽⁵⁾ And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.

⁽⁶⁾ But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female.

⁽⁷⁾ For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; ⁽⁸⁾ and they twain shall

and woman as created for a permanent relationship to each other, not as left to unite and separate as appetite or caprice might prompt.

⁽⁵⁾ **For the hardness of your heart.**—The force of the answer lies (1) as reported by St. Matthew, in the emphasised substitution of “suffered” for “commanded.” The scribes of the school of Hillel, as in St. Mark’s report in the implied contrast between the written Law of Moses and the eternal Law of God, had almost turned divorce into a duty, even when there was no ground for it but incompatibility of temper or other lesser fault, as if Deut. xxiv. 1 had *enjoined* the writing a bill of divorcement in such cases. (2) In the grounds assigned for the permission. Our Lord’s position in the controversy between the two schools was analogous to that in which those who are true at once to principles and facts not seldom find themselves. He agreed, as we have seen, with the ideal of marriage maintained by the followers of Shammai. He accepted as a legitimate interpretation of the Law that of the followers of Hillel. But He proclaimed, with an authority greater than that of Moses, that his legislation on this point was a step backwards when compared with the primary law of nature, which had been “from the beginning,”

and only so far a step forward because the people had fallen into a yet lower state, in which the observance of the higher law was practically impossible. But for the possibility of divorce the wife would have been the victim of the husband’s tyranny; and law, which has to deal with facts, was compelled to choose the least of two evils. Two important consequences, it will be obvious, flow from the reasoning thus enforced: (1) that the “hardness of heart” which made this concession necessary may be admitted as at least a partial explanation of whatever else in the Law of Moses strikes us as deviating from the standard of eternal righteousness embodied in the law of Christ—as, *e.g.*, the tolerance of polygamy and slavery, and the severity of punishment for seemingly trivial faults; (2) that the principle is one of wider application than the particular instance, and that where a nation calling itself Christian has sunk so low as to exhibit the “hardness of heart” of Jews or heathens, there also a concessive legislation may be forced upon the State even while the Church of Christ asserts its witness of the higher truth.

⁽⁶⁾ **God made them male and female.**—In Gen. ii. 24 the words appear, *primâ facie*, as spoken by Adam; but words so uttered, prompted by the Holy Spirit, and

be one flesh : so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. ⁽⁹⁾ What therefore

God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

⁽¹⁰⁾ And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same *matter*. ⁽¹¹⁾ And

^a Matt.
5. 32, &
19. 9.

he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife,^a and marry another, committeth adultery against her. ⁽¹²⁾ And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

stamped with the divine sanction, might well be looked on as an oracle from God, the expression of a law of His appointment. They may, however, legitimately be taken also as the historian's comment on the words of Adam in the previous verse, and in this case, have more definitely the stamp of a divine authority.

⁽⁹⁾ **What therefore God hath joined.**—Strictly interpreted, the words go further than those of Matt. v. 32, and appear to forbid divorce under all circumstances. They are, however, rather the expression of the principle that should underlie laws, than the formulated law itself, and, as such, they assert the true ideal of marriage without making provision (such as was made before) for that which violates and annuls the ideal. It is remarkable that the essence of the marriage is made to depend, not on laws, or contracts, or religious ceremonies, but on the natural fact of union. Strictly speaking, as the better systems of law have in part recognised, that constitutes, or should constitute, marriage. The sin of all illicit intercourse, whether in adultery, or concubinage, or prostitution, is that it separates that union from the relations and duties which the divine order has attached to it, and makes it simply minister

to the lusts of man's lower nature. The evil of every system that multiplies facilities for divorce is that it treats as temporary what was designed to be permanent, and reduces marriage, so far as it goes, to concubinage *durante bene placito*. This may, in some stages of social progress, as verse 5 indicate, be the least of two evils; but it does not cease to be an evil, and the efforts of all teachers and legislators should be directed to raise the standard of duty rather than to acquiesce in its debasement.

⁽¹⁰⁾ **And in the house.**—St. Mark's narrative is, on the whole, much shorter than St. Matthew's; but this detail of the question coming from the disciples after they had entered the house is given by him only. It implies that they too found it hard to accept a teaching which ran so directly counter to their previous habits of thought.

⁽¹²⁾ **And if a woman shall put away her husband.**—This also is peculiar to St. Mark, and it is noticeable, as being the only passage in our Lord's teaching which distinctly states the case referred to, and passes sentence on the wife who divorces her husband and marries again, as well as on the husband who divorces his wife, and the wife who is so divorced. Roman law

(13) And they brought | that he should touch them:
 young children to him, ^a a Matt. 19. 13. | and his disciples rebuked

allowed the wife, as well as the husband, to exercise this power, and the frequency of such divorces (as in the case of a wife who had had "eight husbands in five autumns") is noted by Juvenal (*Sat.* vi. 230) as one of the corruptions of his time. The Law of Moses made no such provision, but the practice would appear as in the case of Salome, sister of Herod the Great (*Joseph. Ant.* xv. 7, § 10), and Herodias, to have crept in under the lax and half-heathen rule of the Herodian dynasty. All three cases are dealt with on the same grounds: (1) that the marriage relationship ought to be indissoluble, and that one cause only justifies its dissolution; and (2) that any further permission of divorce is but a concession to the hardness of men's hearts for the avoidance of greater evils. The questions to which the law thus proclaimed gives rise had been dealt with in Matt. v. 32. One serious difference has, however, to be noticed. Where in the earlier form of the precept we read, "causeth her (the woman put away for any cause but adultery) to commit adultery," we have here, more emphatically as bearing on the position of the husband in such a case, the statement that he too, by contracting another marriage under such conditions, "commits adultery." The rights and duties of the two sexes in this matter are placed on an equality which legislation and social feeling have often systematically ignored. The utmost that the law of Christ allows in such a case (*i.e.*, for any cause short of adultery) is a divorce *a*

mensâ et thoro, not a *vinculo*. The legislation which permits the complete divorce on other grounds, such as cruelty or desertion on either side, is justified, so far as it is justifiable at all, on the ground of the "hardness of heart" which makes such a concession necessary. It is interesting to compare St. Paul's treatment of cases which the letter of this command did not cover, in 1 Cor. vii. 10—15. We are not surprised to find St. Mark omitting the "hard saying" about the eunuchs with which St. Matthew's report ends (Matt. xix. 12). It was hardly likely, even if he knew it, to commend itself to him as adapted for the Gentile readers for whom he wrote his Gospel. Probably, however, for the reason thus given, it was not part of the current oral teaching of the Church, and was recorded by St. Matthew as something exceptional. (See Matt. v. 32.)

(13) **And they brought young children to him.**—St. Luke (xviii. 15) uses a word which implies infancy. The fact that they were brought (we may reasonably assume by their mothers) indicates that there was something in our Lord's look and manner that attracted children, and impressed their parents with the feeling that He loved them. That feeling, we may well believe, was deepened by His acts and words when He had taken in His arms the child whom He set before His disciples as a pattern of the true greatness of humility (chap. ix. 36), and taught them that the angels of those little ones beheld the face of his Father (Matt. xviii.

those that brought *them*.

⁽¹⁴⁾ But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is

the kingdom of God.

⁽¹⁵⁾ Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. ⁽¹⁶⁾ And he took them up in his arms,

3). The motives of the disciples in rebuking those that brought them, may, in like manner, be connected with what they had just heard from their Master's lips. What interest, they might have thought, could He have in these infants, when He had in those words, as reported by St. Matthew (xix. 12), appeared to claim for the "eunuch" life a special dignity and honour? What could the pressing claims of mothers and their children be to Him but a trouble and vexation, interfering with the higher life of meditation and of prayer?

⁽¹⁴⁾ **He was much displeased.**—The word, as used of our Lord, is peculiar to St. Mark; St. Matthew uses it of the disciples (xx. 24, xxvi. 8) and of the chief priests (xxi. 15).

Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not . . .—St. Mark represents our Lord as reproducing almost verbally the teaching of Matt. xviii. 3. The tenderness of His sympathy was kindled into indignation at the rough indifference of the disciples. As in thousands of those whose lives have been modelled after His pattern, the love of children was not weaker, but stronger, precisely because it depended on no human relationship, but sprang from His seeing in them the children of His Father.

Of such is the kingdom of God.—That is, the kingdom of heaven *belongs* to such as these, is theirs by inheritance. The meaning of the "such" is explained by what follows. Only by falling back into the child-like temper can even grown-up men really receive the kingdom.

⁽¹⁵⁾ **Verily I say unto you.**—St. Matthew does not give the verse. St. Mark has it in common with St. Luke (xviii. 17). To receive the kingdom of God "as a little child," is to receive it after the manner of a child, with simplicity and faith, humility and love. Unless these conditions were fulfilled, those who were disputing who was the greatest in it, were as if they had not even entered it, those who reproved the approach of the little ones showed that they were as yet far from it.

⁽¹⁶⁾ **And he took them up in his arms.**—Better, *folded them in His arms*, or *embraced them*, leaving the question whether they were lifted from the ground open. The word is used by St. Mark only here, and in chap. ix. 36. The actual "blessing," though implied in St. Matthew (He "laid his hands upon them"), is also definitely mentioned by him only. It is significant that the tense for "blessed them" is in the best MSS. the imperfect, representing

put *his* hands upon them, and blessed them.

(17) And when he was

^a Matt.
19. 16.

gone forth into the way,^a there came one running, and kneeled to him, and

continued or repeated action. One by one He took the children in His arms and blessed them. The words and the act have rightly been regarded, as in the Baptismal Office of the Church of England, as the true warrant for infant baptism. More than passages of doubtful import in the Acts (xvi. 15, 33) and Epistles (1 Cor. vii. 14); more than the authority, real or supposed, of primitive antiquity; more than the analogy of the Jewish Sacrament of Circumcision; more than the legal fiction on which the Catechism lays stress that they fulfil the conditions of baptism by their sponsors—they justify the Church of Christ at large in commending infants, as such, to the blessing of their Father. The blessing and the prayer of Christ cannot be regarded as a mere sympathising compliance with the fond wishes of the parents, and if infants were capable of spiritual blessings then, why, it may well be asked, should they be thought incapable now?

(17) And when he was gone forth.—Better, *as He was going forth*.

There came one running . . .—The vagueness with which a man who must have been conspicuous is thus introduced, without a name, is every way significant. He was, like Nicodemus, “a ruler of the Jews” (Luke xviii. 18), *i.e.*, probably, like Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the Sanhedrin or great Council, or at least a ruler of a synagogue. He was, besides this, conspicuously rich, and of

high and ardent character. There is one other case in the first two Gospels which presents similar phenomena. In the narrative of the supper at Bethany, St. Matthew and St. Mark record the passionate affection which expressed itself in pouring the precious ointment of spikenard upon our Lord’s head as the act of “a woman” (Matt. xxvi. 7; Mark xiv. 3), leaving her unnamed. In John xii. 3 we find that the woman was Mary, the sister of Lazarus. The train of thought thus suggested points to the supposition that here also there may have been reasons for suppressing in the records a name which was familiar to the narrator. What if the young ruler were Lazarus himself? The points of agreement are sufficiently numerous to warrant the conjecture. The household of Lazarus, as the spikenard ointment shows, were of the wealthier class. The friends who came to comfort the bereaved sisters were themselves, in St. John’s language, “of the Jews”—*i.e.*, of the chief rulers (John xi. 19). The young ruler was obviously, from his belief in eternal life, and his ready answer to our Lord’s questions, a devout Pharisee, and the language of Martha (John xi. 24) shows that she too believed in eternal life and the resurrection of the dead. The answer to the young ruler, as “One thing thou lackest” (as given by St. Mark and St. Luke), is almost identical with that to Martha, “One thing is needful” (Luke x. 42). In such a case, of

asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? ⁽¹⁸⁾ And

Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *there is none good but one, that is,*

course, nothing can be attained beyond conjectural inference, but the present writer must avow his belief that the coincidences in this case are such as to carry the evidence to a very high point of probability. It is obvious that the hypothesis, if true, adds immensely to the interest both of the narrative now before us, and to that of the death and resurrection of Lazarus in John xi. (See Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*. Art. *Lazarus*.)

Good Master.—The better MSS. of St. Matthew omit the adjective, and it was probably added there by later copyists to bring the passage into a verbal agreement with the narrative of St. Mark and St. Luke. From the prominence given to it in the form of our Lord's answer, as reported by them, as well as by St. Mark, we may reasonably believe that it was actually uttered by the questioner. The words show reverence and, at least, half-belief. They are such as might well come from the brother of one who had sat at Jesus' feet, drinking in His words (Luke x. 39)—from one who, like Nicodemus, looked on Him as a Rabbi, "a Teacher" sent from God, or, as in the very terms which we find here, as a man pre-eminently "good" (John vii. 12).

That I may inherit eternal life?—The question exhibits the highest and noblest phase of Pharisaism. The seeker has a firm belief in something that he knows as "eternal life." He

thirsts for it eagerly. He believes that it is to be won, as a perpetual inheritance, by some one good deed of exceptional and heroic goodness. He feels that he has as yet done no deed that can claim that character. The Teacher has left on him the impression of a goodness such as he had seldom, if ever, seen before, and as being therefore able to guide him to the Supreme Good.

⁽¹⁸⁾ **Why callest thou me good?**—Here again the older MSS. of St. Matthew give a different form to our Lord's answer: "Why askest thou Me concerning that which is good? There is One that is the Good." The alteration was probably made, as before, for the sake of agreement with the other Gospels. In either case the answer has the same force. The questioner had lightly applied the word "good" to One whom he as yet regarded only as a human teacher—to an act which, it seemed to him, was in his own power to perform. What he needed, therefore, was to be taught to deepen and widen his thoughts of goodness until they rose to Him in Whom alone it was absolute and infinite, through fellowship with Whom only could any teacher rightly be called good, and from Whom alone could come the power to do any good thing. The method by which our Lord leads him to that conclusion may, without irreverence, be permitted to call up the thought of the method in which Socrates is related to have dealt

God. ⁽¹⁹⁾ Thou knowest the
commandments, Do not
commit adultery, Do not

kill, Do not steal, Do not
bear false witness, Defraud
not, Honour thy father

with like questioners, both in the grave, sad irony of the process, and in the self-knowledge in which it was designed to issue. How far our Lord's words were meant to tell the inquirer that He Himself was less good than God, and had no claim to that title, is a question which naturally presents itself, and which we need not shrink from answering. It lies in the nature of the case that the goodness of the Son of Man was a human goodness, perfect as human, but as such necessarily finite, and it is essentially characteristic of such a goodness that in proportion as it draws near to the infinite goodness of the Father it becomes conscious of its own limitation. The highest holiness shrinks most from the repute of sanctity.

(19) **Thou knowest the commandments.**—The questioner is answered as from his own point of view. If eternal life was to be won by doing, there was no need to come to a new Teacher for a new precept. It was enough to keep the commandments, the great moral laws of God, as distinct from ordinances and traditions (Matt. xv. 3) with which every Israelite was familiar. Our Lord's answer was clearly determined by the method of which we have ventured to speak as analogous to that of Socrates. To a questioner of another type of character He might have pointed (as in Matt. xxii. 37) to the two great commandments, the love of God, and the love of man, on which

hung all the Law and the Prophets. Here it was more in harmony with His loving purpose to leave out of sight altogether the commandments of the first table, that tell men of their duty towards God, and to direct attention only to those which, as speaking of our duty to our neighbour, were thought common and familiar things. The change in the order of the commandments, so that the Fifth follows those which in the Decalogue it precedes, seems to imply a design to lead the seeker through the negative to the positive forms of law, through what seemed to the questioner to be merely definite prohibitions of single acts to the commandments which were "exceeding broad," as fulfilled only in the undefined region of the affections. It was, perhaps, connected with the fact that many of the scribes placed the Fifth Commandment in the First, not in the Second Table. Many of the better MSS. place the Seventh Commandment here before the Sixth, and St. Matthew (xix. 19) adds the summary of the whole in "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

Defraud not.—Peculiar to St. Mark. It seems as if intended to be a special application of the Tenth Commandment. One who had great possessions, gathered in the usual ways by which men gain wealth, needed to examine himself specially by that text. Were there no ill-gotten gains in his treasure as inherited or acquired? Had no wages of the reaper been kept back: no sharp bargains driven

and mother. ⁽²⁰⁾ And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth.

⁽²¹⁾ Then Jesus beholding him, loved him, and said

unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up

with widows or orphans or the poor? The Greek word occurs in the LXX. of Deut. xxiv. 14, and its use by St. James (v. 4), implies that the evil which it condemned was but too prevalent among the wealthier classes of Palestine, as of other countries.

⁽²⁰⁾ **All these have I observed.**—There is obviously a tone of impatient surprise in the questioner's reply. He had come seeking some great thing to satisfy his lofty aspirations after eternal life. He finds himself re-taught the lessons of childhood, sent back, as it were, to the lowest form in the school of holiness to learn the A B C of righteous conduct instead of rising to something heroic and sublime. He had not learnt that to keep any one of those commandments in its completeness is the task of a life, that to keep one perfectly implies keeping all, that to break one willingly and knowingly, is to transgress all (James ii. 10). In marked contrast with this half-contemptuous treatment of the simpler elements of religion we may recall our Lord's use, in the Temptation, of the three passages connected, directly or indirectly, with those which were written on the phylacteries that devout Jews wore, and which would naturally be taught to children as their first lesson in the Law. (See Matt. iv. 1—11.)

⁽²¹⁾ **Jesus . . . said unto**

him . . .—The striking and interesting words, "Jesus beholding him" (better, perhaps, *gazing on him*), "loved him," are special to this gospel. There was something in the young seeker after holiness which drew to him, in a measure altogether exceptional, the affection of the Divine Teacher. The same word is used in regard to him which is used in relation to the "disciple whom Jesus loved" (John xiii. 23), and (the coincidence here taking its place in the chain of evidence for the view above suggested) to Lazarus, and Martha, and Mary (John xi. 5). There was the fervour, the longing after a higher life, the personal trust, which made him a not unworthy object of the love of Jesus, and therefore He would not spare the discipline which the questioner needed, the test which, being such as he was, was required for the completeness of his life. Here also we note what reminds us of the loving interest with which Socrates looked on the young men in whom he saw the promise and potency of good, and who were in danger of falling into the common vices of the time or being misled by the teaching of the Sophists. The "love" was, we may believe, shown by a look which attracted the notice of the disciples, possibly by an act, like "the kiss of peace," with which Rabbis were wont to reward the zeal or intelligence of their scholars.

the cross, and follow me. |

| ⁽²²⁾ And he was sad at that

Go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast.—It would be altogether a mistake to see in this either an obligation binding on all seekers after eternal life, or even what has been called a “counsel of perfection,” a precept laying down an indispensable condition for all who aim at its higher forms and powers. It was strictly a remedy for the special evil which hindered the young ruler’s progress to perfection, applicable to others so far only as their cases are analogous. He was to remember that he was a steward, not a possessor, of the wealth that had been entrusted to him. It would be idle to deny that there have been and are many such analogous types of character, and so far as any one is conscious of being under the power of wealth and its temptations, so far there is a call to some act asserting his victory over those temptations, in the spirit, if not in the letter, of the command thus given. But it is, we must remember, the spirit, and not the letter, which is binding. Distribution to the poor was then almost the only form of charity. A wider range of action is presented by the organisation of modern Christian societies, and the same sacrifice may be made in ways more productive of true and permanent good; in the foundation, *e.g.*, of schools or hospitals, in the erection of churches, in the maintenance of home or foreign missions.

Treasure in heaven.—The parallelism with the Sermon on the Mount should not be forgotten (Matt. v. 20). The “treasure” is the “eternal life” which the young ruler was seeking, the memory of good

deeds, the character formed and perfected, the vision of the presence of God.

Come, take up the cross, and follow me.—Here again St. Mark adds to the reports given to St. Matthew and St. Luke words that are pregnant with meaning. The seeker could not then understand all their significance, though they spoke of a life far other than that he was leading, far other also than that which he had pictured to himself as his ideal of the future. To the Teacher that cross was now coming, day by day, nearer, and He saw that each true disciple must be prepared to follow Him in that path of suffering, which was also the path of glory. “*Via crucis, via lucis.*” The words are, however, wanting in many of the best MSS. and they may have been an addition inserted as from a reminiscence of chap. viii. 34.

⁽²³⁾ **Went away grieved.**—Better, *frowning*, or as with a look that lowered. The word is the same as that which is used of the sky in Matt. xvi. 3. The discipline so far did its work. It made the man conscious of his weakness. He shrank from the one test which would really have led him to the heights of holiness at which he aimed. Yet the sorrow, though it was a sign of the weakness of one whose heart was not yet whole with God, was not without an element of hope. A mere worldling would have smiled with cynical contempt, as the Pharisees did when they heard words of a like tendency (Luke xvi. 14). Here there was at least a conflict. On the common view, that we can know

saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.

⁽²³⁾ And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! ⁽²⁴⁾ And the

disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! ⁽²⁵⁾ It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle,

nothing more of the questioner, it might seem as if the failure was final. On that which has been suggested here, we may believe that the Lord, who "loved" the seeker after eternal life in spite of his inward weakness, did not leave him to himself. The sickness, the death, the resurrection of Lazarus, may have been the discipline which proved that the things that are "impossible with men are possible with God" (verse 27). We are at least not hindered by any insuperable chronological difficulty, though, as has been said above, many harmonists adopt a different arrangement, from placing those events after the dialogue with the young ruler.

⁽²³⁾ And Jesus looked round.—The glance and gesture are characteristically mentioned by St. Mark only.

How hardly shall they that have riches . . .—The Greek adverb is somewhat stronger than the colloquial meaning of the English. The nearest rendering would be, *with what difficulty shall they that have riches*. And yet the words imply not so much the mere difficulty as the painfulness of the process. Here, as elsewhere, the "kingdom of heaven" is not the state of happiness after death, but the spiritual life and the society of

those in whom it is realised even upon earth. Into that Kingdom those only can enter who become as little children, as in other things, so in their unconsciousness of the cares of wealth and their readiness to part with it at the call of Christ

⁽²⁴⁾ How hard is it for them that trust in riches.—The words have the appearance of limiting, and so softening, the seeming sternness of the previous utterance. There is, however, good reason for thinking, as they are wanting in some of the best MSS. (including the Vatican and the Sinaitic), that they were added by some one (possibly, first of all, as a marginal explanation) who sought to tone down the words of warning to what seemed a rational medium. Omitting the doubtful words, the sentence runs, "How hard is it to enter into the kingdom of God!"—hard alike for rich and poor, though, as the words that follow show, it was hardest for the former. The special form in which the disciples are addressed—"children"—may be noted as peculiar to St. Mark's report. It appears again in John xiii. 33, and would seem to have belonged to moments of special and, as it were, fatherly tenderness.

⁽²⁵⁾ It is easier for a camel

than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. ⁽²⁶⁾ And they were astonished out of measure,

saying among themselves, Who then can be saved? ⁽²⁷⁾ And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is

to go through the eye of a needle.—Two explanations have been given of the apparent hyperbole of the words. (1) It has been conjectured that the Evangelists wrote not *κάμηλος* (a camel), but *κάμιλος* (a cable). Not a single MS., however, gives that reading here, though it is found in one or two in St. Matthew and St. Luke, and the latter word, which is not found in any classical Greek author, is supposed by the best scholars (e.g., Liddell and Scott) to have been invented for the sake of explaining this passage. (2) The fact that in some modern Syrian cities the narrow gate for foot-passengers, at the side of the larger gate, by which waggons, camels, and other beasts of burden enter the city, is known as the "needle's eye," has been assumed to have come down from a remote antiquity, and our Lord's words are explained as alluding to it. The fact—to which attention was first called in Lord Nugent's *Lands, Classical and Sacred*—is certainly interesting, and could the earlier use of the term in this sense be proved, would give a certain vividness to our Lord's imagery. It is not, however, necessary. The Talmud and Arabic proverbs of a later date give the parallel phrase of an *elephant* passing through a needle's eye. The Koran (*Sur. vii. 38*) reproduces the very words of the Gospel. There is no reason to think that the comparison, even if it was not already proverbial, would present

the slightest difficulty to the minds of the disciples. Like all such comparisons, it states a general fact, the hindrance which wealth presents to the higher growths of holiness, in the boldest possible form, in order to emphasise its force, and leaves out of sight the limits and modifications with which it has to be received, and which in this instance (according to the text on which the English version is based) had been supplied beforehand by our Lord Himself (verse 24).

⁽²⁶⁾ Who then can be saved?—Literally, *And who can be saved?* the conjunction implying a train of unuttered thought. There is an almost child-like *naïveté* in the question thus asked by the disciples. They, whether among their own people or among strangers, had found the desire of wealth to be the universal passion. Even they themselves, when they had forsaken their earthly goods, had done so (as Peter's question showed but too plainly, verse 28) as with a far-sighted calculation. They were counting on outward riches in the Kingdom of God as well as outward glory. And now they heard what seemed to them a sweeping condemnation, excluding all who possessed, and, by implication, all who sought after, riches from the Kingdom, and this spoken of one in whom they would have admired the union of great wealth with a high standard of righteousness.

⁽²⁷⁾ Jesus looking upon

impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.

(28) Then Peter began to say unto him, ^a Lo, we have ^a Matt. 19. 27.

left all, and have followed thee. ⁽²⁹⁾ And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house,

them.—We can surely conceive something of the expression of that look. He had gazed thus on the young ruler, and read his inner weakness. Now, in like manner, He reads that of the disciples; and the look, we may believe, told of wonder, sorrow, tenderness, anxiety. Those feelings utter themselves in the words that follow, partly in direct teaching, partly in symbolic promises, partly as in St. Matthew's report (xx. 1—16), in the parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard.

With men it is impossible.

—General as the words are in their form, we cannot help feeling that they must have seemed to the disciples to have rebuked their hasty judgment, not only as to the conditions of salvation generally, but as to the individual case before them. He, the Teacher, would still hope, as against hope, for one in whom He had seen so much to love and to admire. On the hypothesis which has been suggested above (ver. 22) a way was found even there to show that what seemed and was so hard was yet possible with God. To pass through sickness and the gate of death, to enter behind the veil and see the vanity of riches as it is seen there, wrought out a cure for him whom the Lord loved and would not leave to perish. The wider teaching of the words is, of course, that wealth, though bringing with it many temptations, may be so used, through God's grace, as to be a help, not a hindrance, in that deli-

verance from evil which is implied in the word "salvation." The words "with God all things are possible" are, in the nature of the case, limited to possibilities which do not involve anything at variance with true thoughts of what God is. He "cannot deny Himself" (2 Tim. ii. 13).

(29) **Lo, we have left all.**—The question betrayed the thoughts that had been working in the minds of the disciples, and of which, as was his wont, St. Peter made himself the spokesman. They had complied with their Master's commands and had "left all and followed Him" (chap. i. 13—20). What were they to have as the special reward to which they were thus entitled? It is obvious that in asking for that reward they showed that they had complied with the letter only, not with the spirit, of the command. They had not in the true sense of the word, denied themselves, though they had forsaken the earthly calling and the comforts of their home; and they were dwelling on what they had done, as in itself giving them a right to compensation. In them their self-denial was but as an investment for a near or distant future.

(30) **Verily I say unto you.**—St. Mark, possibly as writing for Gentile converts, omits the special promise to the Twelve, that they should "sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. xix. 28).

or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's,

⁽³⁰⁾ but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers,

There is no man that hath left . . .—While the loyalty and faith of the Apostles were rewarded with a promise which satisfied their hopes then, and would bring with it, as they entered more deeply into its meaning, an ever-increasing satisfaction, their claim to a special privilege and reward was at least indirectly rebuked. Not for them only, but for all who had done or should hereafter do as they did, should there be a manifold reward, even within the limits of their earthly life, culminating hereafter, in "the world to come" (better, *in the coming age*) in the full fruition of the "eternal life" of which they had heard so recently in the question of the young ruler.

For my sake.—The variations in the other Gospels, "for my Name's sake (Matt. xix. 29), "for the kingdom of God's sake" (Luke xviii. 29), are significant, (1) as explanatory, (2) as showing that the substantial meaning of all three is the same. The act of forsaking home and wealth must not originate in a far-sighted calculation of reward, or the ostentation of a self-chosen poverty; it must proceed from devotion to a Person and a cause, must tend to the furtherance of the gospel and the establishment of the divine Kingdom.

⁽³⁰⁾ **Shall receive an hundredfold.**—In St. Matthew (xix. 29, and St. Luke xviii. 30) we have the less definite "manifold more." Here it is manifestly impossible

to take the words literally, and this may well make us hesitate in expecting a literal fulfilment of the promise that the Apostles "should sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" which in St. Matthew's report (xix. 28) precedes it. We cannot look for the hundredfold of houses, or wives, or children. What is meant is, that the insight which springs from self-sacrifice for the sake of God's kingdom multiplies and intensifies even the common joys of life. Relationships multiply on the ground of spiritual sympathies. New homes are opened to us. We find new friends. The common things of life—sky, and sea, and earth—are clothed with a new beauty to the cleansed eyes of those who have conquered self. They enter into the beatitude of the "meek" who "inherit the earth" (Matt. v. 5). St. Mark adds words which, if one may so speak, are so strange that they must have been actually spoken, — "with persecutions." We seem to hear the words spoken as in a parenthesis, and in a tone of tender sadness, not, perhaps, altogether unmingled with a touch of the method which teaches new truths, by first meeting men's expectations, and then suddenly presenting that which is at variance with them. The thoughts of the disciples were travelling on to that "hundredfold," as though it meant that all things should be smooth and pros-

and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. ⁽³¹⁾ But many *that are* first shall be last;^a and the last first.

b Matt.
20. 17.

a Matt.
19. 30.

⁽³²⁾ And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem;^b and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid. And he took again

perous with them. They are reminded that persecution in some shape, the trials that test and strengthen, are inseparable from the higher life of the kingdom. (Comp. Acts xiv. 22.) There were to be new homes, but it was to be for the hunted exiles; new friends, but they were to be fellow-sufferers, tried in the fire of adversity. Men need that discipline in order that they may feel that the new things are better than the old. Looking to the connexion between St. Mark's Gospel and St. Peter, we may, perhaps, venture to think of them as having been engraved on the Apostle's mind by the lessons of his experience. He had been taught to see in the "fiery trial" almost the necessary condition of the "exceeding joy" (1 Pet. iv. 12, 13).

⁽³¹⁾ Many that are first shall be last.—It will be noted that St. Mark omits the parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard, which follows in St. Matthew as an illustration of the truth. The words, both taken by themselves, and as illustrated by that parable, point obviously not only to the general fact of the ultimate reversal of human judgments, but to the individual case of which the disciples had made themselves the judges. They had seen one who stood high in his own estimate brought low by the test of the Divine Teacher. They were flattering themselves that they, who had

left all, and so could stand that test, were among the first in the hierarchy of the kingdom. For them too, unless their spirit should become other than it was in its self-seeking and its self-complacence, there might be an unexpected change of position, and the first might become the last. The parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard, that follows in St. Matthew's Gospel, was designed to bring that truth more vividly before them.

⁽³²⁾ And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem.—The narrative is not continuous, and in the interval between verses 16 and 17 we may probably place, as suggested in the Note on verse 27, our Lord's "abode beyond Jordan" (John x. 40), the raising of Lazarus, and the short sojourn in the city called Ephraim (John xi. 54). This would seem to have been followed by a return to Peræa, and then the journey to Jerusalem begins. The account in St. Mark adds some significant facts to that in St. Matthew and St. Luke. "Jesus went" (literally, *was going*—implying continuance) "before them." It was as though the burden of the work on which He was entering pressed heavily on His soul. The shadow of the cross had fallen on Him. He felt something of the conflict which reached its full intensity in Gethsemane, and therefore He needed solitude that He

the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him, ⁽³³⁾ *saying*, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall con-

demn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles: ⁽³⁴⁾ and they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again.

might prepare Himself for the sacrifice by communing with His Father; and instead of journeying with the disciples and holding "sweet converse" with them, went on silently in advance. This departure from His usual custom, and it may be, the look and manner that accompanied it, impressed the disciples, as was natural, very painfully. "They were amazed, and as they followed, were afraid." It was apparently as explaining what had thus perplexed them that He took the Twelve apart from the others that followed (including probably the Seventy and the company of devout women of Luke viii. 2) and told them of the nearness of His passion.

And they were amazed . . . and were afraid . . .—We have clearly in these words a vivid reproduction of states of feeling which the disciples remembered, but for which the facts related hardly give a sufficient explanation. Probably the words that had just been spoken—still more, perhaps, the look and tone which accompanied them—and the silent withdrawal from converse with them, struck all the disciples with a vague fear, and the Twelve with absolute terror.

⁽³³⁾ Behold, we go up to Jerusalem.—The words repeat

in substance what had been previously stated after the Transfiguration (chap. ix. 31; Matt. xvii. 22), but with greater definiteness. Jerusalem is to be the scene of His suffering, and their present journey is to end in it, and "the chief priests and scribes" are to be the chief actors in it, and "the Gentiles" are to be their instruments in it. The mocking, the spitting (Mark x. 34), the scourging, the crucifixion (Matt. xx. 19), all these are new elements in the prediction, as if what had before been presented in dim outline to the disciples was now brought vividly, in every stage of its progress, before His mind and theirs.

⁽³⁴⁾ And the third day he shall rise again.—This, as before, came as a sequel of the prediction that seemed so terrible. The Master looked beyond the suffering to the victory over death, but the disciples could not enter into the meaning of the words that spoke of it. St. Luke, indeed (as if he had gathered from some of those who heard them what had been their state of feeling at the time), reports that "they understood none of these things, and this saying was hid from them, neither understood they the things that were spoken" (Luke xviii. 34). All

(35) And James and John,^a the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldst do for us whatsoever we shall desire. (36) And he said unto them, What

^a Matt.
20. 20.

would ye that I should do for you? (37) They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory. (38) But Jesus said

was to them as a cloud upon their Master's soul which time, they imagined, would disperse.

Shall spit upon him.—In common with St. Luke (xviii. 32), but not with St. Matthew.

(35) And James and John.—In St. Matthew (xx. 20) their mother is represented as coming with them, and uttering her prayer for them. The state of feeling described in the previous Note supplies the only explanation of a request so strange. The mother of James and John (we find, on comparing Matt. xxvii. 56 and Mark xv. 40, that her name was Salome) was among those who "thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear" (Luke xix. 11); and probably the words so recently spoken, which promised that the Twelve should sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. xix. 28) had fastened on her thoughts, as on those of her sons, to the exclusion of those which spoke of suffering and death. And so, little mindful of the teaching of the parable they had just heard (Matt. xx. 1—16), they too expected that they should receive more than others, and sought (not, it may be, without some passing jealousy of Peter) that they might be nearest to their Lord in that "regeneration" which seemed to them so close at hand. The mother came, if we follow St.

Matthew's report (xx. 20) to ask for her sons what they shrank from asking for themselves, and did so with the act of homage ("worshipping Him") which implied that she was speaking to a King.

(37) One on thy right hand.—The position, as in Ps. cx. 1, was that of one next in authority to the king. So in Greek poetry both Apollo (Callimachus, *Hymn in Apoll.* l. 28) and Athene (Pindar, *Fragm.* xi. 9, ed. Dissen) are represented as sitting at the right hand of Zeus. The favour which had already been bestowed might, in some degree, seem to warrant the petition. John was known emphatically as "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (John xiii. 23; xix. 26; xx. 2), and if we may infer a general practice from that of the Last Supper (John xiii. 23), he sat by His side at their customary meals. James was one of the chosen three who had been witnesses of the Transfiguration (chap. ix. 2). Both had been marked out for special honour by the new name of the Sons of Thunder (chap. iii. 17). The mother might well think that she was but asking for her sons a continuance of what they had hitherto enjoyed. The sternness of our Lord's words to Peter (Matt. xvi. 23) might almost justify the thought that his position had been forfeited.

(38) Ye know not what ye

unto them, Ye know not what ye ask : can ye drink of the cup that I drink of ? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with ? ⁽²⁰⁾ And they said

unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of ; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be

ask.—The words come to us as spoken in a tone of infinite tenderness and sadness. That nearness to Him in His glory could be obtained only by an equal nearness in suffering. Had they counted the cost of that nearness ?

Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of ?—The question meets us, How did the two disciples understand our Lord's words ? We are familiar with their meaning. Was it equally clear to them ? As far as the cup is concerned, there can be little doubt that any reader of the Old Testament would at once recognise it as the symbol of a good or evil fortune. There was the "cup running over" of Ps. xxiii. 5, the "wine-cup of fury" of Jer. xxv. 15, the "cup of astonishment and desolation" of Ezek. xxiii. 33. Later on, the thought re-appears in our Lord's prayer that "the cup" of agony might pass from Him (chap. xiv. 36), in His readiness to drink that "cup" because the Father had given it to Him (John xviii. 11). The meaning of the "baptism" was, perhaps, less obvious, yet here also there were the overwhelming "proud waters" of Ps. cxxiv. 5, the "waves and billows" of Ps. xlii. 7. The very verb, "to baptise" (i.e., to plunge into the deep), was used by Josephus for the destruction of a city (*Wars*, iv. 3, § 3), by

the LXX. for "terrifying" in Isa. xxi. 4. Our Lord Himself had already used it in dim mysterious reference to His coming passion (Luke xii. 50). There was, the words seem to indicate, a baptism of blood as well as of water and of fire. There was enough, then, to lead them to see in their Master's words an intimation of some great suffering about to fall on Him, and this is, indeed, implied in the very form of their answer. "We are able," they say, in the tone of those who have been challenged and accept the challenge. That their insight into the great mystery of the passion went but a little way as compared with their Master's, lies, of course, in the very nature of the case. When the beloved disciple, in after years, taught by his own experience and by his brother's death (Acts xii. 2), thought over the words, as pointing to a baptism not of "water only" but of "water and blood" (1 John v. 6), he must have seen somewhat more clearly into their depth of meaning.

And be baptized with the baptism.—The clause seems to have been found originally in St. Mark only, and to have been added afterwards by the transcribers of St. Matthew (it is absent from some of the best MSS.) to bring the reports of the two Gospels into more entire agreement.

baptized: ⁽⁴⁰⁾ but to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but *it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared. ⁽⁴¹⁾ And when the

ten heard *it*, they began to be much displeased with James and John. ⁽⁴²⁾ But Jesus called them *to him*, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are

⁽⁴⁰⁾ **Is not mine to give.**—The words in italics “but it shall be given,” are, of course, not in the Greek, and they spoil the true construction of the sentence. Our Lord does not say that it does not belong to Him to give what the disciples asked, but that He could only give it according to His Father's will and the laws which He had fixed. The true rendering accordingly would be, *is not mine to give, save to those for whom it has been prepared*. The Greek conjunction for “but” becomes, as in chap. iv. 22, ix. 8, equivalent to “except.” Considered as a prediction, there was a singular contrast in the forms of its fulfilment in the future of the two brothers. James was the first of the whole company of the Twelve to pass through the baptism of blood (Acts xii. 2). For John was reserved the weariness and loneliness of an old age surviving all the friendships and companionships of youth and manhood, the exile in Patmos, and the struggle with the great storm of persecution which raged throughout the empire under Nero and Domitian. In the tradition of the poisoned chalice which the Apostle drank, and the caldron of boiling oil in which he was plunged, in both cases without hurt, we may, perhaps, trace a reminiscence of the “cup” and of the “baptism.”

For whom it is prepared.

—He does not say who these are; but the re-appearance of the same words in Matt. xxv. 34 throws some light on their meaning here. The kingdom is reserved for those who do Christ-like deeds of love; the highest places in the kingdom must be reserved for those whose love is like His own, alike in its intensity and its width.

⁽⁴¹⁾ **Much displeased with James and John.**—Literally, *concerning, or about*. The verb is the same as in verse 14. The context shows that it was not a righteous indignation, as against that which was unworthy of true followers of Jesus, but rather the jealousy of rivals, angry that the two brothers should have taken what seemed an unfair advantage of their claims as near of kin (see Note on chap. xv. 40), or of our Lord's known affection for them and for their mother.

⁽⁴²⁾ **Ye know that they which are accounted to rule.**—No words of reproof could more strongly point the contrast between the true and the false views of the Messiah's kingdom. The popular Jewish expectations shared by the disciples, were really heathen in their character, substituting might for right, and ambition for the true greatness of service. In “they which are accounted,” or *they which seem* (the same phrase as in Gal. ii. 9) there is, perhaps, a slight tone of irony. That was no true rule

accounted ¹ to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them;^a and their great ones exercise authority upon them. ⁽⁴³⁾ But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great

¹ Or, think good.

^a Luke 22. 25.

among you, shall be your minister: ⁽⁴⁴⁾ and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. ⁽⁴⁵⁾ For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and

which rested on self-assertion, or the right of might.

Exercise lordship exercise authority.—Better, *lord it over* them. The verb is the same as in 1 Pet. v. 3. The re-appearance of the word in that Epistle takes its place among the coincidences which connect St. Peter with this Gospel. It is not easy to find a like forcible rendering for the other word, but we must remember that it, too, implies a *wrong* exercise of authority, in the interest, not of the subjects, but of the rulers.

⁽⁴³⁾ **Whosoever will be great.**—Better, *whosoever wisheth to be great*. The man who was conscious, as the disciples were, of the promptings of ambition, ought at once to satisfy and purify them by finding his greatness in active service; not because that service leads to greatness of the type which natural ambition seeks for, but because it is in itself the truest and highest greatness. It is not unnatural to suppose that our Lord's use of the word "minister" (*diakonos*) led to the adoption of that title (still extant in our "deacon") for the office of which ministering services were the chief characteristic.

⁽⁴⁴⁾ **Whosoever of you will be the chiefest.**—Better, *first*, as continuing the thought of verse 16. The "servant" (better, *slave*) im-

plies a lower and more menial service than that of the "minister" of the preceding verse, just as the "chief" or *first* involves a higher position than that of the "great ones" there spoken of. We introduce a false antithesis if we assign the "service" to this life, and the "greatness" as its reward, to the life after death. The true teaching of the words is that the greatness is the service. The Church of Rome has in this, as in other things, expressed an ideal which she has not realised when she identifies the *Summus Pontifex* with the *Servus Servorum*.

⁽⁴⁵⁾ **Not to be ministered unto.**—The words found a symbolic illustration when our Lord, a few days afterwards, washed the feet of the disciples who were still contending about their claims to greatness (John xiii. 3, 4); and the manner in which St. John connects the act with our Lord's manifested consciousness of His supreme greatness, seems to show that the words which we find here were then present to his thoughts. The Son of Man seemed to the beloved disciple never to have shown Himself so truly king-like and divine as when engaged in that menial act. But that act, we must remember, was only an illustration; and the words found their true meaning in His whole life, in His

to give his life a ransom for many.

(46) And they came to Jericho: ^a and as he went

^a Matt.
20. 29.

out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimæus, the son of Timæus, sat by

poverty and humiliation, in the obedience of childhood, in service rendered, naturally or supernaturally, to the bodies or the souls of others in the crowning act of sacrifice.

To give his life a ransom for many.—The word rightly rendered “ransom,” is primarily “a price made for deliverance,” and in this sense it is found in the Greek version of the Old Testament for “the ransom” which is accepted instead of a man’s life in Ex. xxi. 30, for the “price of redemption” accepted as an equivalent for an unexpired term of service in Lev. xxv. 50, for riches as the “ransom of a man’s life” in Prov. xiii. 8. No shade of doubt accordingly rests on the meaning of the word. Those who heard it could attach no other meaning to it than that He who spake them was about to offer up His life that others might be delivered. Seldom, perhaps, has a truth of such profound import been spoken, as it were, so incidentally. It is as if the words had been drawn from Him by the contrast between the disputes of the disciples and the work which had occupied His own thoughts as He walked on in silent solitude in advance of them. It is the first distinct utterance, we may note, of the plan and method of His work. He had spoken before of “saving” the lost (Matt. xviii. 11): now He declares that the work of “salvation” was to be also one of “redemption.” It could only be

accomplished by the payment of a price, and that price was His own life. The language of the Epistles as to the “redemption that is in Christ Jesus,” our being “bought with a price” (Rom. iii. 24; 1 Cor. vi. 20), “redeemed by His precious blood” (1 Pet. i. 19), the language of all Christendom in speaking of the Christ as our Redeemer, are the natural developments of that one pregnant word. The extent of the redemptive work, “for many,” is here, as in Matt. xx. 45, indefinite rather than universal, but “the ransom for *all*” of 1 Tim. ii. 6, the “propitiation for the sins of the whole world” of 1 John ii. 2, shows in what sense it was received by those whom the Spirit of God was guiding into all truth. Even the preposition in “for many,” has a more distinct import than is given in the English version. It was, strictly speaking, a “ransom” *instead of, in the place of* (ἀντὶ not ὑπὲρ) “many.” Without stating a theory of the atonement, it implied that our Lord’s death was, in some way, representative and vicarious; and the same thought is expressed by St. Paul’s choice of the compound substantive ἀντίλυτρον (*antilytron*) when, using a different preposition, he speaks of it as a ransom *for* (ὑπὲρ, i.e., *on behalf of*) all men (1 Tim. ii. 6).

(46) **And they came to Jericho.**—St. Mark agrees with St. Matthew (xx. 29) in placing the miracle as the disciples were leaving Jericho, and differs from him

the highway side begging.
⁽⁴⁷⁾ And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, *thou* son of David, have mercy on me. ⁽⁴⁸⁾ And many charged him that he should hold his peace : but he cried the more a great

deal, *Thou* son of David, have mercy on me. ⁽⁴⁹⁾ And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise ; he calleth thee. ⁽⁵⁰⁾ And he, casting away his garment,

in speaking of one blind man only, and in giving his name. St. Luke (xviii. 35), on the other hand, places the miracle "as they drew nigh unto Jericho." It is a possible, but not probable, solution of the difficulty that there were two such incidents, one as the disciples entered, the other as they left the city. A more natural explanation is that St. Luke coming later into the fields, and gathering information from many different quarters, followed, in this instance, the report of one who had forgotten this detail of the incident. The city of Jericho, memorable in the history of the conquest of Canaan (Josh. ii. 1—21), and for the solemn curse by which it was devoted to destruction (Josh. vi. 26), remained in its desolate state for some centuries. It was rebuilt under Ahab by Hiel, of Bethel (1 Kings xvi. 34). The fertility of the region soon raised it to prominence. Herod the Great bought it from Cleopatra, to whom it had been assigned by Antonius, and adorned it with palaces, a hippodrome, and an amphitheatre (Josh. *Ant.* xv. 4, § 2).

And as he went out of Jericho.—Looking back to verse 1, which speaks of our Lord having departed "beyond Jordan," we

may believe that He crossed the river with His disciples at the ford near Jericho (Josh. ii. 7). On this assumption, the imagery of verse 39 may have been in part suggested by the locality. The river recalled the memory of His first baptism by water ; that led on to the thought of the more awful baptism of agony and blood.

Blind Bartimæus.—Better, as giving the same order as the Greek, *the son of Timæus, Bartimæus a blind beggar, was sitting by the wayside begging.* The later MSS. have the definite article before "blind," as though he were well-known and conspicuous. It is noticeable that the name was Greek with the Aramaic prefix Bar (=son), a combination not found elsewhere.

⁽⁴⁹⁾ And commanded him to be called.—The better MSS. give, more vividly, "and said, Call him."

Be of good comfort.—The cheering words of the disciples or bystanders are given by St. Mark only, as is also the eager action of the man "casting off his garment (i.e., the outer mantle which impeded rapid movement) and leaping up." The Greek word, in the better MSS. is much stronger than the English "rose."

rose, and came to Jesus.

(51) And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight.

(52) And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith

¹ Or,
saved
thee.

A.D. 33.

^a Matt.
21. 1.

hath made thee whole.¹ And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.

CHAPTER XI.—⁽¹⁾ And when they came nigh to Jerusalem,^a unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the

(51) **Lord.**—Better, *Rabboni*, the word being the same as in John xx. 16, and occurring in these two passages only. The word was an augmentative form of Rabbi, and as such expressed greater reverence. It takes its place as another example of St. Mark's fondness for reproducing the very syllables that were spoken. (Comp. chaps. v. 41; vii. 34.)

(52) **Thy faith hath made thee whole.**—We note, as elsewhere, that the work of healing was dependent on the faith of the recipient as well as on the power of the healer. (Comp. chaps. ii. 5; v. 34, where the self-same words are used, and vi. 5, 6.)

Followed Jesus in the way.—We may reasonably infer from this that Bartimæus was one of those who went up with the travelling company to Jerusalem. The prominence which St. Mark gives to his name suggests the thought that he afterwards became more or less conspicuous in the Church of the Circumcision, his new-found gift of sight qualifying him to take his place among the eye-witnesses of the things that were done in the ensuing week. In the Apocryphal *Gospel of Nicodemus* he appears as one of the witnesses for the defence on our

Lord's trial. We must not forget in passing from this stage of our Lord's ministry, the remarkable incident of our Lord's sojourn with Zaccheus, which is related by St. Luke only (xix. 1—10), and the parable of the Pounds, as given in Luke xix. 11—28.

XI.

(1) **And when they came nigh to Jerusalem.**—Here again we have, as far as we can, to fill up a gap in St. Mark's narrative. We have to think of the journey of about eighteen miles up the rugged ravine that leads from Jericho to Jerusalem. Our Lord, as before, was followed by the disciples, and they in their turn were followed by the crowds of pilgrims who were drawn to the Holy City either by the coming Passover or by wonder and curiosity to see what part the Prophet of Nazareth would take. (Comp. John vii. 11; xi. 56; xii. 12.) Throughout the multitude, including the disciples, there was a feverish expectation that He would at last announce Himself as the Christ, and claim His kingdom (Luke xix. 11). They reach Bethany "six days before the Passover," probably, *i.e.*, on the Friday afternoon (John xii. 1). They

mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two of his disciples,⁽²⁾ and saith unto them, Go your way into the village

over against you : and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat ;

remain there for the Sabbath, probably in the house of Lazarus or Simon the leper (Matt. xxvi. 2; John xii. 2; and in that of the latter we have the history of the anointing, which St. Mark relates out of its chronological order in chap. xiv. 3—9). The point of time with which the narrative, which now becomes more continuous, opens, may be fixed at the dawn of the first day of the week, the day-break of Palm Sunday.

Unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives.—Some of the better MSS. give "Bethany" only. The village of Bethphage is named in Luke xix. 29, and here in many MSS. in conjunction with Bethany, and before it, and from this it would seem probable that it lay on the road from Jericho, and was therefore to the east of Bethany, and nearer the summit of the hill. The name signified "the house of un-ripe figs," as Bethany did "the house of dates," and Gethsemane "the oil press," the three obviously indicating local features giving distinctness to the three sites. All three were on the Mount of Olives. Bethany is identified with the modern *El-'Azariyeh*, or *Lazarieh* (the name attaching to its connection with the history of Lazarus), which lies about a mile below the summit on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, in a woody hollow planted with olives, almonds, pomegranates, and figs. The palms implied in the name of Bethany

and in the history of the entry into Jerusalem (John xii. 13) have disappeared.

He sendeth forth two of his disciples.—The messengers are not named in any of the Gospels. The fact that Peter and John were sent on a like errand in Luke xxii. 8 makes it, perhaps, probable that they were employed in this instance.

⁽²⁾ **Go your way into the village over against you.**—This may have been either Bethany or, on the assumption that it was nearer Jerusalem, Bethphage itself, or possibly it might have been some smaller village, the name of which has perished.

A colt tied.—St. Mark, with St. Luke and St. John, omits the mention of the "she-ass" bound with the colt, on which St. Matthew lays stress as a literal fulfilment of Zech. ix. 9. St. John speaks of a "young" or "small" ass, using the diminutive of the usual name (*ὄνάριον*). The command clearly implies a deliberate fulfilment of the prophecy cited by St. Matthew (xxi. 4, 5). They were to claim the right to use the beast as for the service of a King, not to hire or ask permission.

Whereon never man sat.—The fact is mentioned by St. Mark and St. Luke only (xix. 30). It was, probably, in their eyes significant as showing that He who used the colt did so in His own right, and not as filling a place which others had filled before Him.

loose him, and bring *him*.

⁽³⁾ And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him hither. ⁽⁴⁾ And they went their way, and

found the colt tied by the door without in a place where two ways met; and they loose him. ⁽⁵⁾ And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt?

⁽²⁾ The Lord hath need of him.—Simple as the words are, they admit of three very different interpretations. "The Lord" may be used either (1) in the highest sense as equivalent to Jehovah, as though the ass and the colt were claimed for His service; or (2) as referring to Christ in the special sense in which He was spoken of as "the Lord" by His disciples; or (3) as pointing to Him, but only in the language which all men would acknowledge, and without any special claim beyond that of being the Master whom the disciples owned as in a lower sense their Lord. Of these (3) is all but excluded by the facts of the case. The words involve a claim to more than common authority, and the claim is recognised at once. In favour of (2) we have the numerous instances in which the disciples and the evangelists not only address their Master as "Lord," but speak of Him as "the Lord" (chap. xvi. 19; Matt. xxviii. 6; Luke x. 1; xvii. 6; xviii. 6; John xi. 2; xiii. 13; xx. 2, 13, 18, 20, 25; xxi. 7, 12). For (1), lastly, we have our Lord's use of the word as a synonym for God (chaps. v. 19; xiii. 20). On the whole (2) appears to commend itself as most in accordance with the customary language of the disciples. On the very probable assumption that the owners

of the colt were, in some sense, themselves disciples, they would recognise the full import of the words thus addressed to them, and obey without hesitation. Some of the best MSS. give the remarkable reading "immediately he sendeth it again," as though it were a promise that the Lord would return the colt.

⁽⁴⁾ Without in a place where two ways met.—Each touch is characteristic of St. Mark, and implies personal observation on the part of his informant—probably, as has been suggested above, St. Peter himself. The colt was at the door—outside, not inside, the court-yard; it was not at "a place," but at "the place" (as we speak of "the cross-roads") where two ways met. The "two ways" may have been those which led respectively to Bethany and Bethlehem.

⁽⁵⁾ And certain of them that stood there.—This again, though perhaps implied in our Lord's words, is not reported by St. Matthew. St. Mark omits all reference to the prophecy of Zechariah ix. 9, which St. Matthew cites as fulfilled in our Lord's entry. It is, however, too important to be passed over. The words seem to have been cited from memory, the Hebrew text of Zech. ix. 9 beginning, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion; shout, O daughter of Jeru-

(6) And they said unto them even as Jesus had commanded: and they let them go. (7) And they brought

the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him. (8) And many spread their garments

salem," and inserting "just, and having salvation" in the description of the King. As the words stand in Zechariah (we need not here discuss the question as to the authorship or composition of that book) they paint the ideal King coming, not with "chariot" and "horse" and "battle bow," like the conquerors of earthly kingdoms, but as a prince of peace, reviving the lowlier pageantry of the days of the Judges (Judg. v. 10; x. 4; xii. 14), and yet exercising a wider dominion than David or Solomon had done, "from sea to sea, and from the river (Euphrates) to the ends of the earth" (Zech. ix. 10). That ideal our Lord claimed to fulfil. Thus interpreted, His act was in part an apparent concession to the fevered expectations of His disciples and the multitude; in part also a protest, the meaning of which they would afterwards understand, against the character of those expectations and the self-seeking spirit which mingled with them. Here, as before, we trace the grave, sad accommodation to thoughts other than His own to which the Teacher of new truths must often have recourse when He finds Himself misinterpreted by those who stand altogether on a lower level. They wished Him to claim the kingdom, that they might sit on His right hand and on His left. Well, He would do so, but it would be a kingdom "not of this world" (John xviii. 36), utterly unlike all that they were looking for.

(7) He sat upon him.—Our Lord rode on the colt, and the she-ass, of which St. Matthew speaks (xxi. 2), followed, or went along by His side. St. Mark and St. Luke mention the colt only.

(8) And many spread their garments.—Part of the crowd had come with Him from Galilee, part poured out from Bethany, excited by the recent resurrection of Lazarus (John xii. 17). Some went before Him, some followed. As they advanced they were met by a fresh crowd pouring forth from Jerusalem. Of the latter, St. John records that they came out with palm-branches in their hands, as if to salute a king with the symbols of his triumph. (Comp. Rev. vii. 9.) To spread their garments on the way was a recognised act of homage to a king. So Jehu, when the officers of the army of Israel chose him as their ruler, walked upon the garments which they spread beneath his feet (2 Kings ix. 13). So Agamemnon, tempted to an act of barbaric pomp, after the manner of Eastern kings, entered his palace at Mycenæ, walking upon costly carpets (*Æschylus, Agam.* 891).

Others cut down branches.—The Greek word for "branches" is used by St. Mark only. It describes the leafy boughs forming, as they were thrown down, a kind of litter or matting, rather than the larger woody branches.

Off the trees.—The better MSS. give "from the fields," a

in the way: and others cut down branches off the trees, and strawed them in the way. ⁽⁹⁾ And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he

that cometh in the name of the Lord: ⁽¹⁰⁾ Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest. ⁽¹¹⁾ And Jesus entered into Jeru-

reading which, perhaps, agrees better with the account of the "branches" given in the preceding Note.

And strawed them in the way.—Omitted in the better MSS.

⁽⁹⁾ **Hosanna.**—We gather, by comparing the four Gospels, the full nature of the mingled cries that burst from the multitude.

(1) As here, "Hosanna." The word was a Hebrew imperative, "Save us, we beseech thee," and had come into liturgical use from Ps. cxviii. 25. That Psalm belonged specially to the Feast of Tabernacles (see Perowne on Ps. cxviii.), and as such, was naturally associated with the palm-branches; the verses from it now chanted by the people are said to have been those with which the inhabitants of Jerusalem were wont to welcome the pilgrims who came up to keep the feast. The addition of "Hosanna to the Son of David" made it a direct recognition of the claims of Jesus to be the Christ; that of "Hosanna in the highest" (comp. Luke ii. 14) claimed heaven as in accord with earth in this recognition. (2) "Blessed is" (or *be*) ("the King" in St. Luke) "He that cometh in the name of the Lord." These words, too, received a special personal application. The welcome was now given, not to the crowd of pilgrims, but to the King. (3) As

in St. Luke, one of the cries was an echo of the angels' hymn at the Nativity, "Peace on earth, and glory in the highest" (Luke ii. 14).

(4) As in St. Mark, "Blessed is the kingdom of our father David." We have to think of these shouts as filling the air as He rides slowly on in silence. He will not check them at the bidding of the Pharisees (Luke xix. 39), but His own spirit is filled with quite other thoughts than theirs. And those who watched Him closely (probably one or more of the devout women who seem to have been St. Luke's chief informants) saw the tears streaming down His cheeks as He looked on the walls and towers of the city, and heard, what the crowds manifestly did not hear, His lamentation over its coming fall (Luke xix. 41). It is a natural inference from the silence of the other three Gospels as to this incident, that it did not attract general notice.

⁽¹⁰⁾ **Blessed be the kingdom.**—The shout of blessing for the kingdom as well as for the King, is another touch by which St. Mark's record is distinguished from the others.

⁽¹¹⁾ **And now the eventide was come.**—The word "eventide" is somewhat indefinite, but it included the two or three hours before sunset, as well as after. The procession, if it started in the

saalem, and into the temple : and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve.

(12) And on the morrow,

^a Matt.
21. 19.

when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry :
(13) and seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves,^a he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon : and when he came to it, he

morning, had probably been delayed by frequent halts, and its movements through such a dense crowd must have been but slow.

He went out unto Bethany.

—St. Mark places the incident that follows on the morning subsequent to the triumphal entry, and before the cleansing of the Temple. We have to choose, there being an obvious error of arrangement in one or other of the narratives, between the two, and the probability seems on the whole, looking to the probable source of his information, in favour of the more precise and more vivid record of St. Mark. The lodging at Bethany is explained partly by what we read in chap. xiv. 3—9, yet more by John xi. 1, 2, xii. 1. There He found in the house of the friends who were dear to Him, Lazarus and his sisters, or their friend Simon the leper (chap. xiv. 3; John xii. 1—3), the rest and peace which He could not find in the crowded city. The suppression of the name of the household of Lazarus in the first three Gospels is every way significant, as suggesting that there were reasons which for a time (probably till the death of Lazarus) led all writers of the records which served as the basis of the Gospel history to abstain from the mention of any facts that might attract attention to them.

(12) **On the morrow.**—If we may infer from Luke xxi. 37, John xviii. 1, 2, that the greater part of the night had been spent either in solitary prayer or in converse with the disciples, we have an explanation of the exhaustion following on a prolonged fast which sought food wherever there might seem even a chance of finding it.

(13) **Seeing a fig-tree afar off . . . if haply he might find any thing thereon.**—The fig-tree in Palestine bears two or three crops a year. Josephus, indeed, says that fruit might be found on the trees in Judæa for ten months out of the twelve. Commonly at the beginning of April the trees that still grow out of the rocks between Bethany and Jerusalem are bare both of leaves and fruit, and so probably it was now with all but the single tree which attracted our Lord's notice. It was in full foliage, and being so far in advance of its fellows it might not unnaturally have been expected to have had, in the first week of April, the "first ripe fruit" (Hos. ix. 10), which usually was gathered in May or June. The name of Bethphage, as explained in the Note on verse 1, indicates that its position was more favourable than that of most other places for this early crop. So, in Song Sol. ii. 13, the appearance of the "green figs" coincides with

found nothing but leaves ;
for the time of figs was not
yet. ⁽¹⁴⁾ And Jesus answered
and said unto it, No man
eat fruit of thee hereafter

^a Matt.
21. 12.

for ever. And his disciples
heard it.

⁽¹⁵⁾ And they come to
Jerusalem:^a and Jesus went
into the temple, and began

that of the flowers of spring, and the time of the singing of birds, which obviously indicates an earlier date than June. The illustrations from the branches and leaves of the fig-tree in Luke xxi. 29, 30, suggest that the season was a somewhat forward one.

For the time of figs was not yet.—It has been sometimes urged that this gives the reason for our Lord's coming to seek, "if haply He might find" fruit, rather than for His failing to find it. The fig season had not come, and therefore the fruit, if any had been borne, or, if some of the autumn crop still remained, would not have been gathered. There is nothing, however, against taking the words in their more natural sequence. The precocious foliage had suggested the thought that some of the early ripe figs might be already formed ; but it was no exception, as far as fruit was concerned, to others of its kind. For it, as for them, the season, even of the earliest fruit, had not come. The seeing the fig-tree "afar off," is a touch peculiar to St. Mark, and adds force to the narrative, as implying a keener pressure of hunger than St. Matthew's description.

⁽¹⁴⁾ **No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever.**—From the lips of one of like passions with ourselves, the words might seem the utterance of impatient disappointment. Here they assume the character of a solemn judgment

passed not so much on the tree as on that of which it became the representative. The Jews, in their show of the "leaves" of outward devotion, in the absence of the "fruits" of righteousness, were as that barren tree. But a few weeks before (Luke xiii. 6) He had taken the fig-tree to which a man came "seeking fruit and finding none," as a parable of the state of Israel. Then the sentence, "Cut it down," had been delayed, as in the hope of a possible amendment. Now, what He saw flashed upon Him in a moment (if we may so speak) as the parable embodied. The disappointment of the expectations which He had formed in His human craving for food was like the disappointment of the owner of the fig-tree in the parable. The sentence which He now passed on the tree, and its immediate fulfilment, were symbols of the sentence and the doom which were about to fall on the unrepentant and unbelieving people. The view taken by some commentators that the whole series of actions were, from first to last, deliberately symbolical, that there was no seeking for fruit, no disappointment at not finding it, is clearly one which did not present itself to the minds of the Evangelists, and we have no adequate ground for accepting so strained and artificial an hypothesis.

⁽¹⁵⁾ **And Jesus went into the temple.**—Here, again, we note a discrepancy between the narratives

to cast out them that sold
and bought in the temple,

and overthrew the tables of
the moneychangers, and the

of St. Matthew and St. Mark, sufficient to prove that the two Gospels, though largely derived from the same sources, were entirely independent of each other. St. Mark (xi. 11) says definitely that on the day of His solemn entry our Lord went into the Temple, "looked round about on all things there,"—i.e., on the scene of traffic and disorder described in this verse—and then, "the evening-tide being come" (or, "the hour being now late"), went back to Bethany, and did what is here narrated on the following day. So, with a like difference of order, St. Mark places the sentence on the barren fig-tree on the next morning, and before the cleansing of the Temple. (Comp. Note on verse 12.) St. John (ii. 13—25) records an act of like nature as occurring at the commencement of our Lord's ministry, on the first visit to Jerusalem after His baptism. Critics who have started with the assumption that the repetition of such an act was impossible, have inferred accordingly that the narrative has been misplaced either by the Three or by St. John, some holding with the latter and some with the former, on grounds more or less arbitrary. From the purest human historical point of view, we may, I believe, accept both narratives as true. If Jesus of Nazareth had been only a patriot Jew, filled with an intense enthusiasm for the holiness of the Temple, what more likely than that He should commence His work with a protest against its desecration? If the evils against which He thus pro-

tested, after being suppressed for a time, re-appeared in all their enormity, what more probable than that He should renew the protest at this stage of His work, backed as He now was by the eager enthusiasm of the people? What more natural, again, than that the second cleansing should revive the memory of the first, and call up with it the words which are recorded by St. John, and not by the Three, and which served as the basis of the charge that He had threatened to destroy the Temple (chap. xiv. 58; Matt. xxvi. 61; John ii. 20, 21). There is—it need not be concealed—a real difficulty in the omission of the earlier cleansing by the Three, and in the absence of any reference to the later cleansing by the Fourth; but the fact in either case is only one of many like facts incident to the structure of the Gospels. The Three knew nothing—or rather, they record nothing—as to our Lord's ministry in Jerusalem prior to this last entry. The Fourth, writing a Gospel supplementary either to the Three or to the current oral teaching which they embodied, systematically passes over, with one or two notable exceptions, what they had recorded, and confines his work to reporting, with marvellous vividness and fulness, specially selected incidents.

Cast out them that sold and bought in the temple.—The apparent strangeness of the permission of what seems to us so manifest a desecration, was obviously not felt by the Jews as we feel it. Pilgrims came from all

seats of them that sold | doves; ⁽¹⁶⁾ and would not

| suffer that any man should | carry *any* vessel through

parts of the world to keep the Passover, to offer their sacrifices, sin-offerings, or thank-offerings, according to the circumstances of each case. They did not bring the victims with them. What plan, it might seem, could be more convenient than that they should find a market where they could buy them as near as possible to the place where the sacrifice was to be offered? One of the courts of the Temple, probably that known as the Court of the Gentiles, was therefore assigned for the purpose, and probably the priests found their profit in the arrangement by charging a fee or rent of some kind for the privilege of holding stalls. There is no trace of the practice prior to the Captivity, but the dispersion of the Jews afterwards naturally led men to feel the want of such accommodation more keenly. But this permission brought with it another as its inevitable sequel. The pilgrims brought with them the coinage of their own country—Syrian, Egyptian, Greek, as the case might be—and their money was either not current in Palestine, or, as being stamped with the symbols of heathen worship, could not be received into the Corban, or treasury of the Temple. For their convenience, therefore, money-changers were wanted, who, of course, made the usual *agio*, or profit, on each transaction. We must picture to ourselves, in addition to all the stir and bustle inseparable from such traffic, the wrangling and bitter words and reckless oaths which necessarily grew out of it with such a people as the Jews.

The history of Christian churches has not been altogether without parallels that may help us to understand how such a desecration came to be permitted. Those who remember the state of the great cathedral of London, as painted in the literature of Elizabeth and James, when mules and horses laden with market produce, were led through St. Paul's as a matter of everyday occurrence, and bargains were struck there, and burglaries planned, and servants hired, and profligate assignations made and kept (Milman's *Annals of St. Paul's*, c. xi., pp. 283—288) will feel that even Christian and Protestant England has hardly the right to cast a stone at the priests and people of Jerusalem.

And the seats of them that sold doves.—The Greek has the article—“*the* doves,” that were so familiar an object in the Temple courts. There is a characteristic feature in this incident as compared with the earlier cleansing. Then, as taking into account, apparently, the less glaringly offensive nature of the traffic, our Lord had simply bidden the dealers in doves to depart, with their stalls and bird-cages (John ii. 16). Now, as if indignant at their return to the desecrating work which He had then forbidden, He places them also in the same condemnation as the others.

⁽¹⁶⁾ **And would not suffer that any man.**—Peculiar to St. Mark. The vessels referred to included, probably, the baskets and other common implements of traffic. Men were using the courts of the

the temple. ⁽¹⁷⁾ And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of

thieves. ⁽¹⁸⁾ And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doc-

Temple as a short cut from one part of the city to another.

⁽¹⁷⁾ **Is it not written.**—The words which our Lord quotes are a free combination of two prophetic utterances: one from Isaiah's vision of the future glory of the Temple, as visited both by Jew and Gentile (Isa. lvi. 7); one from Jeremiah's condemnation of evils like in nature, if not in form, to those against which our Lord protested (Jer. vii. 11).

My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer.—The marginal reading "*for all the Heathen*," is a far more accurate translation. Our Lord appears to dwell on the true idea of that Court of the Gentiles as being a place where Heathen worshippers might draw near to the God of Israel, even though they had not as yet been admitted by circumcision within the outward limits of the covenant. That court ought to have resounded with their prayers for light and truth, for pardon and peace, not with the strife of tongues of those who bought and sold.

A den of thieves.—Better, *a den of robbers*. The pictorial vividness of the words must not be passed over. Palestine was then swarming with bands of outlaw brigands, who, as David of old in Adullam (1 Sam. xxii. 1), haunted the limestone caverns of

Judæa. The wranglings of such a company over the booty they had carried off were reproduced in the Temple, and mingled with the Hallelujahs of the Levites and the Hosannas of the crowds. We ask, as we read the narrative, how it was that the work of expulsion was done so effectively and with so little resistance. The answer is found (1) in the personal greatness and intensity of will that showed itself in our Lord's look and word and tone; (2) in the presence of the crowd that had followed Him from the Mount of Olives and had probably filled the courts of the Temple; and (3) in the secret consciousness of the offenders that they were desecrating the Temple, and that the Prophet of Nazareth, in His zeal for His Father's house, was the witness for a divine truth.

⁽¹⁸⁾ **The chief priests.**—These, as commonly in the Gospels, were the heads of the twenty-four courses of the priesthood, as well as Annas and Caiaphas, who were designated by the title in its higher sense, the one as actually high priest, the other as president of the Sanhedrin (see Luke iii. 2; John xviii. 24).

They feared him.—Peculiar to St. Mark. Note also his omission of the facts recorded by St. Matthew: (1) the healing of the blind and the lame in the Temple; (2) the children crying Hosanna. Both from St. Mark's account here

trine. ⁽¹⁹⁾ And when even was come, he went out of the city.

⁽²⁰⁾ And in the morning,^a as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. ⁽²¹⁾ And Peter calling to remembrance

^a Matt.
21. 19.

¹ Or,
Have
the
faith of
God.

saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away. ⁽²²⁾ And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.¹ ⁽²³⁾ For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto

and St. Luke's (xix. 48), we infer that the rest of the day was spent in unrecorded teaching.

⁽¹⁹⁾ And when even was come.—Another note of time peculiar to St. Mark. As before, it may take in any time between 3 P.M. and sunset.

⁽²⁰⁾ And in the morning.—Here again St. Mark's narrative seems at once the fullest and the most precise. As he relates the facts, the disciples did not perceive that the fig-tree was withered away till they passed by on the following morning. Peter then remembered what had been said the day before, and, as the spokesman of the rest, drew his Master's attention to the fact. The immediate withering may have been inferred from its completeness when seen, or its beginning may have been noticed by some at the time. We note the vividness of St. Mark's description, "withered from the roots."

⁽²¹⁾ And Peter calling to remembrance.—St. Mark alone names Peter as the speaker. For "Master" read *Rabbi*. See Note on chap. x. 51. The form of our Lord's answer, "Have faith in God," is also peculiar to him. The word "cursedst" is St. Peter's colloquial description of his Master's solemn and symbolic condemnation. As yet the disciple

did not go beyond the outward act, and thought that our Lord had "cursed" as Balaam sought to do (Num. xxiii. 11—13), as Elisha actually did (2 Kings ii. 24). The teaching that follows would seem to point specially to the misconception of our Lord's purpose which the word implied.

⁽²³⁾ Whosoever shall say unto this mountain.—The promise, in its very form, excludes a literal fulfilment. The phrase to "remove mountains" (as in Zech. iv. 7, 1 Cor. xiii. 2) was a natural hyperbole for overcoming difficulties, and our Lord in pointing to "this mountain" (*i.e.*, the Mount of Olives)—as he had done before to Hermon (Matt. xvii. 20)—did but give greater vividness to an illustration which the disciples would readily understand. A mere physical miracle, such as the removal of the mountain, could never be in itself the object of the prayer of a faith such as our Lord described. The hyperbole is used here, as elsewhere, to impress on men's minds the truth which lies beneath it.

Shall not doubt in his heart.—We find an echo of our Lord's teaching almost in the self-same words in James i. 6.

Those things . . . he shall have whatsoever he sayeth.

this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. ⁽²⁴⁾ Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire,^a

^b Matt.
6. 14.

^a Matt.
7. 7.

when ye pray, believe that ye receive *them*, and ye shall have *them*. ⁽²⁵⁾ And when ye stand praying, forgive,^b if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. ⁽²⁶⁾ But if ye do not forgive, neither

—The better MSS. give, “that *the thing* which he sayeth cometh to pass,” and “he shall have *it*.” The promise is specific rather than general in its form, and so prepares the way for the wider generalisation of the next verse.

⁽²⁴⁾ **What things soever ye desire, when ye pray.**—Here again there is the implied condition (as in Matt. vii. 7) that what is asked is in harmony with the laws and will of God. If it were not so it would not be asked in faith, and every true prayer involves the submission of what it asks to the judgment of the Father. The words suggest the thought, of which we have the full expression in John xi. 42, that our Lord’s miracles were less frequently wrought by an inherent supernatural “virtue”—though this, also, distinctly appears, *e.g.*, in the history of the woman with the issue of blood (Luke viii. 46)—than by power received from the Father, and in answer to His own prayers.

Believe that ye receive them.—The better MSS. give the latter verb in the past tense, “Believe that ye received them.” It is obvious that, as a rule, such words imply prayer for spiritual rather than temporal blessings. In

that region the subjective faith becomes an objective reality. We are to believe, not that we shall one day have what we pray for in a future more or less distant, but that we actually receive it as we pray. In most, if not in all cases, in prayer for peace, pardon, illumination, the promise, though it sounds hyperbolic, is spiritually and psychologically true.

⁽²⁵⁾ **And when ye stand praying, forgive.**—The reproduction of the words which are recorded as having been spoken in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. vi. 14, 15) is very significant. The prayer even of intensest faith is not perfect, unless the temper of the worshipper is also that of the Charity which forgives offences. Such words exclude from the prayers of Christ’s disciples wishes more or less vindictive, which, as in Ps. lxi., cix., had seemed natural and right under a less perfect manifestation of the will and mind of the Father. As suggested above, the warning may have been specially called forth by St. Peter’s off-hand way of speaking of our Lord as “cursing.” With one of his temperament, not without the tendency which shows itself in cursos (chap. xiv. 71), the promise might have led

will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.

(27) And they come again to Jerusalem: and as he was walking in the temple,^a there come to him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders,⁽²⁸⁾ and say unto him, By what authority

^a Matt.
21. 23.
¹ Or,
thing.

doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things? (29) And Jesus answered and said unto them, I will also ask of you one question,¹ and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. (30) The baptism of John,

him to think that his curses would be as prevailing in their power as his blessings. He might be tempted to fall back upon the older type of imprecation as in those psalms, rather than to advance in the Christ-like spirit of forgiveness. It should be noted, however, that verse 26 is wanting in many of the best MSS., and may, therefore, have been inserted from St. Matthew.

(27) And they come again to Jerusalem.—Peculiar to St. Mark is the fact that our Lord was "walking" as well as teaching in the Temple. Probably, as in John x. 23, it was in Solomon's Porch. Comp. Acts v. 12.

The chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders.—St. Mark and St. Luke both name "the scribes," thus including representatives of the three constituent elements of the Sanhedrin. The character of the teaching is further specified by St. Luke, "as He was preaching the gospel"—proclaiming, *i.e.*, the good news of the kingdom, the forgiveness of sins, and the law of righteousness.

(28) By what authority . . ? The right to take the place of an instructor was, as a rule, conferred by the scribes, or their chief representative, on one who had

studied "at the feet" of some great teacher (Acts xxii. 3), and been solemnly admitted (the delivery of a key, as the symbol of the right to interpret, being the outward token) to that office. The question implied that those who asked it knew that the Prophet of Nazareth had not been so admitted. The second question gave point to the first. Could He name the Rabbi who had trained Him, or authorised Him to teach? Had He fulfilled the maxim of the fathers, that one who sought to teach wisdom should first sit at the feet of the wise? (*Pirke Aboth*. c. I.)

(29) I will also ask of you one question.—The question is met by another question. As One who taught as "having authority, and not as the scribes" (Matt. vii. 29), He challenges their right to interrogate Him on the ground of precedent. Had they exercised that right in the case of the Baptist, and if so, with what result? If they had left his claim unquestioned, or if they had shrunk from confessing the result of their inquiry, they had virtually abdicated their office, and had no right, in logical consistency, to exercise it, as by fits and starts, in the case of another teacher.

was *it* from heaven, or of men? answer me. ⁽³¹⁾ And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then did ye not believe him? ⁽³²⁾ But if we shall say, Of men; they feared the people: for all *men* counted John, that he was a prophet indeed.

A. D. 33.

a Matt.
21. 33.

⁽³³⁾ And they answered and said unto Jesus, We cannot tell. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.

CHAPTER XII.—

⁽¹⁾ And he began to speak unto them by parables.*
A certain man planted a

⁽³¹⁾ They reasoned with themselves.—The self-communing was eminently characteristic. The priests and scribes had, in dealing with the mission of John, halted between two opinions. At one time they came to his baptism (Matt. iii. 7); at another they said, "He hath a devil" (Matt. xi. 18). They watched the ebb and flow of a public reverence which the death of John had deepened, and dared not repudiate his character as a prophet. They were reluctant to admit that character, for this would have involved the necessity of accepting the testimony which he had borne to the work and office of Jesus.

⁽³²⁾ That he was a prophet indeed.—The intensifying adverb is one of St. Mark's graphic touches of emphasis.

⁽³³⁾ We cannot tell.—Better, as also in Matt. xxi. 27, *We do not know*. The repetition of the verb "tell" in the English of our Lord's answer, gives an unreal emphasis which is not in the Greek. The real stress lies on the pronoun "I." The confession of impotence to which the priests and scribes were thus

brought was, as has been said, a virtual abdication. Before such a tribunal the Prophet whom they called in question might well refuse to plead. There was, indeed, no need to answer. For those who were not wilfully blind and deaf, the words that He had spoken, the works which He had done, the sinless life which He had led, were proofs of an authority from God.

XII.

⁽¹⁾ And he began to speak unto them by parables.—The parable which, like that of the Sower, and like that only, is related in all the first three Gospels, was one which had obviously impressed itself strongly, as that had done, on the minds of those who heard it, and was reproduced by independent reporters with an almost textual exactness. We find in St. Matthew (xxi. 28—32) that it was preceded by the shorter parable of the Two Sons who were sent into the vineyard, one giving a lip-assent which was not followed by action, the other a hasty refusal which passed into repentance and obedience.

A certain man planted a

vineyard, and set an hedge about *it*, and digged a *place* for the winefat, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country. ⁽²⁾ And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of

the vineyard. ⁽³⁾ And they caught *him*, and beat him, and sent *him* away empty. ⁽⁴⁾ And again he sent unto them another servant; and at him they cast stones, and wounded *him* in the head, and sent *him* away shamefully handled. ⁽⁵⁾ And again he sent another; and him

vineyard.—The frequent recurrence of this imagery at this period of our Lord's ministry is significant. (Comp. Matt. xx. 1; xxi. 28; Luke xiii. 6.) The parable that now meets us points in the very form of its opening to the great example of the use of that image in Isa. v. 1. Taking the thought there suggested as the key to the parable, the vineyard is "the house of Israel;" the "fence" (as in the Rabbinic proverb that it was the duty of the wise to set a "fence" around the law—*Pirke Aboth*, c. I.) finds its counterpart in the institutions which made Israel a separate and peculiar people; the "wine-press" (better, *wine-vat*—i.e., the reservoir underneath the press), in the Temple, as that into which the "wine" of devotion, and thanksgiving, and charity was to flow; the "tower" (used in vineyards as a place of observation and defence against the attacks of plunderers; comp. Isa. i. 8), in Jerusalem and the outward polity connected with it. So, in like manner, the letting out to husbandmen and the going "into a far country" answers historically to the conquests by which the Israelites became possessors of Canaan, and were left, as it were,

to themselves after the direct theocracy had ceased, to make what use they chose of their opportunities.

⁽²⁾ **At the season.**—We must be content here with following the general drift of the parable, and cannot find any exact parallel in the history of Israel to the successive sendings of the servants of the householder. It is enough to see in them the general expectation (comp. the language of Isa. v. 4, "I looked that it should bring forth grapes") that the developed life of Israel should be worthy of its calling, and the mission of the prophets who, as the servants of Jehovah, were sent from time to time to call the people to bring forth the fruits of righteousness.

⁽⁴⁾ **Wounded him in the head.**—The Greek verb may be noted as one, which though common enough in a figurative sense, "to bring to a head," "recapitulate," is nowhere else found with this meaning.

⁽⁵⁾ **Beating some, and killing some.**—The language paints the general treatment of the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah (Jer. xxxvii. 21; xxxviii. 6), Zechariah the son of Jehoiada (2 Chron. xxiv. 21), being the most conspicuous instances. The language of our

they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some. ⁽⁶⁾ Having yet therefore one son, his well-beloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son. ⁽⁷⁾ But those husbandmen said among themselves,

This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be our's.

⁽⁸⁾ And they took him, and killed *him*, and cast *him* out of the vineyard.

⁽⁹⁾ What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? he will come and destroy

Lord in Matt. xxiii. 30, 34, not less than that of Heb. xi. 37, implies that the prophets, as a class, had no light or easy task, and were called upon, one by one, to suffer persecution for the faithful exercise of their office.

⁽⁶⁾ **Having yet therefore one son.**—The language of deliveration and doubt is evidently inapplicable, except by a bold anthropomorphism, to divine acts, but it sets forth (1) the gradually ascending scale of those who were sent, culminating in a difference not of degree only, but of kind, like the contrast between the prophets and the Son in Heb. i. 1, 2; and (2) the employment by God, in His long-suffering pity, of all possible means to lead His people to repentance. (Comp. 2 Pet. iii. 9).

⁽⁷⁾ **This is the heir.**—What we learn elsewhere enables us to understand the feelings with which the priests and scribes must have heard these words. Already had Caiaphas given the counsel that one man should die for the people (John xii. 49), while among those who knew it, and did not protest, were many who believed on Him, and yet, through fear of the Pharisees, were not confessed disciples (John xii. 42). The words

of the parable showed that they stood face to face with One who knew the secrets of their hearts, and had not deceived Himself as to the issue of the conflict in which He was now engaged.

⁽⁸⁾ **Cast him out of the vineyard.**—The minor touches of a parable are not always to be pressed in our interpretation of it; but we can hardly help seeing here a latent reference to the facts (1) that our Lord was delivered over to the judgment of the Gentiles; and (2) that He was crucified outside the Holy City (John xix. 20; Heb. xiii. 12), which was, in a special sense, as the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts.

⁽⁹⁾ **What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do?**—The fact that the answer to this question came, not from the speaker, but from the hearers of the parable, is peculiar to St. Matthew (xxi. 41). On the assumption that those who gave the answer were the Scribes and Pharisees, we may see in it either a real unconsciousness that they were as the men on whom the punishment was to fall, like that of David in 2 Sam. xii. 5, or, more probably, an affected horror, by which they sought to disguise the conviction that the parable was meant for them. They

the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others. ⁽¹⁰⁾ And have ye not read this scripture; The stone which the builders rejected is become the head

^a Ps. 118.

of the corner: ^a ⁽¹¹⁾ this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? ⁽¹²⁾ And they sought to lay hold on him, but feared the people: for they knew that

would not admit, in the presence of the multitude, that they winced at this intimation that their designs were known.

⁽¹⁰⁾ **Have ye not read . . . ?**

—The quotation is remarkable as being found (Ps. cxviii. 22) in the immediate context of the verse which had supplied the "hosanna" shouts of the multitude on the preceding day. In the primary meaning of the Psalm, the illustration seems to have been drawn from one of the stones, quarried, hewn, and marked, away from the site of the Temple, which the builders, ignorant of the head architect's plans, or finding on it no mark (such as recent explorations in Jerusalem have shown to have been placed on the stones of Solomon's Temple in the place where they were quarried, to indicate their position in the future structure of the fabric), had put on one side, as having no place in the building, but which was found afterwards to be that on which the completeness of the structure depended, on which, as the chief corner-stone, the two walls met and were bonded together. The Psalmist saw in this a parable of the choice of David to be king over Israel; perhaps, also, of the choice of Israel itself out of the nations of the world. Elsewhere, as in Eph. ii. 20, and in the language of later ages, Christ Himself is the chief corner-stone. Here the con-

text gives a somewhat different application, and "the stone which the builders rejected" is found in the future converts from among the Gentiles, the "nation bringing forth the fruits" (Matt. xxi. 43) which Israel had not brought forth—the "corner-stone" of the great edifice of the Catholic Church of Christ. This meaning was obviously not incompatible with the other. As the mind of the Psalmist included both David and Israel under the same symbolism, so here the Christ identifies Himself, more or less completely, with the Church which is His body. (Comp. Eph. i. 22, 23.)

⁽¹²⁾ **They sought to lay hold on him.**—We must remember that they had once before made a like attempt, and had been baffled (John vii. 44—46). Now circumstances were even more against them. The Prophet was surrounded by His own disciples, and by an admiring crowd. Open violence they did not dare to venture on, and they had to fall back upon the more crooked paths of stratagem and treachery. Their real or affected unconsciousness of the drift of our Lord's teaching was at last broken through. The last words had been too clear and pointed to leave any room for doubt, and they were roused to a passionate desire for revenge. The pronoun carries us back to the "chief priests and scribes and elders" of chap. xi. 27.

he had spoken the parable against them : and they left him, and went their way.

(13) And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians,^a to catch him in *his* words.

^a Matt. 22. 15.

(14) And when they were

come, they say unto him, Master, we know that thou art true, and carest for no man : for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth : Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not ?

(13) They send unto him.—In St. Matthew the Pharisees are said to have “taken counsel,” or “held a council,” and then to have sent their disciples. Here the act appears more definitely as the result of a coalition of the two parties named. They had acted together, it will be remembered, before (chap. iii. 6). A general account of the Herodians is given in the Note on that verse.

To catch.—Better, perhaps, *en-snare*.

(14) Master, we know that thou art true.—Insidious as the praise was, intended, as it were, to goad Him who was thus addressed into showing, by some rash utterance, that He deserved it, it may be noted as an admission from the lips of adversaries of the supreme truthfulness and fearlessness of our Lord's teaching. The record of our Lord's Jerusalem ministry in St. John's Gospel (*e.g.*, chaps. iii., v., vii., viii., ix.) presents us with many of the occasions to which the Pharisees tacitly referred. It is interesting to note the abhorrence of this “respect of persons” which seems to have been impressed on the minds of the disciples, as in Acts x. 34 ; Jas. ii. 1.

Is it lawful to give tribute . . . ?—The question was obviously framed as a dilemma. If answered

in the affirmative, the Pharisees would be able to denounce Him to the people as a traitor to His country, courting the favour of their heathen oppressors. If in the negative, the Herodians (on the assumption which seems the more probable, that their party courted the favour of the emperor by affirming the lawfulness of tribute) could accuse Him, as He was eventually accused, of “perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar” (Luke xxiii. 2). By some writers, however, it has been assumed that the Herodians agreed with the Pharisees in their assertion of national independence in regard to taxation, and wished the tribute to go into the Tetrarch's treasury.

Tribute.—The original gives the Latin “census,” *i.e.*, the poll-tax of a *denarius* per head, assessed on the whole population, the publicans being bound to transmit the sum so collected to the Roman treasury. As being a direct personal tax, it was looked on by the more zealous Jews as carrying with it a greater humiliation than export or import duties, and was consequently resisted (as by Judas of Galilee and his followers) by many who acquiesced more or less readily in the payment of the customs (Acts v. 37).

(15) Shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me? bring me a penny,¹ that I may see it. (16) And they brought it. And he

¹ Valuing of our money, sevenpence half-penny, as Matt. 18, 28.

saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Cæsar's. (17) And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to

(15) **Bring me a penny.**—The parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard (Matt. xx. 2) and the calculations of the disciples in the cases (1) of the feeding of the Five Thousand (chap. vi. 37), and (2) of the ointment poured on our Lord's feet at Bethany (chap. xiv. 5) indicate that the *denarius* was in common circulation. It was probably part of the fiscal regulation of the Roman government that the poll-tax should be paid in that coin only. In any case, wherever it passed current, it was a witness that the independence of the country had passed away, and that Cæsar was in temporal things its real ruler.

(16) **Image and superscription.**—Better, *inscription*. The coin brought would probably be a silver *denarius* of Tiberius, bearing on the face the head of the emperor, with the inscription running round it containing his name and titles.

(17) **Render to Cæsar.**—As far as the immediate question was concerned, this was of course an answer in the affirmative. It recognised the principle that the acceptance of the emperor's coinage was an admission of his *de facto* sovereignty. But the words that followed raised the discussion into a higher region, and asserted implicitly that that admission did not interfere with the true spiritual

freedom of the people, or with their religious duties. They might still "render to God the things that were His"—i.e., (1) the tithes, tribute, offerings which belonged to the polity and worship that were the appointed witnesses of His sovereignty, and (2) the faith, love, and obedience which were due to Him from every Israelite. The principle which the words involved was obviously wider in its range than the particular occasion to which it was thus applied. In all questions of real or seeming collision between secular authority and spiritual freedom, the former claims obedience as a *de facto* ordinance of God up to the limit where it encroaches on the rights of conscience, and prevents men from worshipping and serving Him. Loyal obedience in things indifferent on the part of the subject, a generous tolerance (such as the Roman empire at this time exercised towards the religion of Israel) on the part of the State, were the two correlative elements upon which social order and freedom depended. Questions might arise, as they have arisen in all ages of the Church, as to whether the limit has, or has not, been transgressed in this or that instance, and for these the principle does not, and in the nature of things could not, provide a direct answer. What it

God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at him.

(18) Then come unto him the Sadducees,^a which say there is no resurrection; and they asked him, saying, (19) Master, Moses wrote unto us, If a man's brother die, and leave *his* wife behind him, and leave no children, that his brother

^a Matt.
22, 23.

should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. (20) Now there were seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and dying left no seed. (21) And the second took her, and died, neither left he any seed: and the third likewise. (22) And the seven had her, and left no seed: last of all the woman died

does prescribe is that all such questions should be approached in the temper which seeks to reconcile the two obligations, not in that which exaggerates and perpetuates their antagonism. Least of all does it sanction the identification of the claims of this or that form of ecclesiastical polity, this or that detail of Church ritual, with the "things that are God's."

They marvelled.—We can picture to ourselves the surprise which the conspirators felt at thus finding themselves baffled where they thought success so certain. The Herodians could not charge the Teacher with forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar. The Pharisees found the duty of giving to God what belonged to Him pressed as strongly as they had ever pressed it. They had to change their tactics, and to fall back upon another plan of attack.

(18) **Then come unto him the Sadducees.**—These, we must remember, consisted largely of the upper class of the priesthood (Acts v. 17). The form of their attack implies that they looked on our Lord as teaching the doctrine of

the resurrection. They rested their denial (Acts xxiii. 8) partly on the ground that they found no mention of it in the Law, which they recognised as the only rule of faith: partly on the maxim of the Rabbi Antigonus of Socho, who was said to have been the founder of the school, that "Men should not be as servants who look to a reward, but as those who serve willingly without it" (*Pirke Aboth*. c. i.). The case which they put, as far as the principle involved was concerned, need not have gone beyond any case of re-marriage without issue; but the question pushed it to its extreme, as what seemed to them a *reductio ad absurdum*. Stress is laid on the childlessness of the woman in all the seven marriages, apparently in order to guard against the possible answer that she would be counted in the resurrection as the wife of him to whom she had borne issue. The law itself, in permitting, under these conditions, a marriage which was in itself treated as incestuous (Deut. xxv. 5; Lev. xviii. 16), may have been either a concession to the idea of

also. ⁽²³⁾ In the resurrection therefore, when they shall rise, whose wife shall she be of them? for the seven had her to wife.

⁽²⁴⁾ And Jesus answering said unto them, Do ye not

therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God?

⁽²⁵⁾ For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the

maintaining the line of inheritance in the same family, or, as some have suggested, may have rested on the feeling that a marriage without issue was in some measure an incomplete union.

⁽²⁴⁾ **Do ye not therefore err?** This is, it may be noted, the one occasion in the Gospel history in which our Lord comes into direct collision with the Sadducees. On the whole, while distinctly condemning and refuting their characteristic error, the tone in which He speaks is less stern than that in which He addresses the Pharisees. They were less characterised by hypocrisy, and more by open worldliness and cruelty, and the former, as the *pessima corruptio optimi*, was that which called down His sternest reproof. The causes of their error were, He told them, two-fold: (1) an imperfect knowledge even of the Scriptures which they recognised; (2) imperfect conceptions of the divine attributes, and therefore an *a priori* limitation of the divine power. They could not conceive of any human fellowship in the life of the resurrection except such as reproduced the relations and conditions of this earthly life.

Because ye know not the scriptures.—More literally, as in St. Matthew, *not knowing the scriptures*.

⁽²⁵⁾ **They neither marry, nor are given in marriage.**—In St. Luke's report (xx. 34, 35) our Lord emphasises the contrast in this respect between the children of this world and the children of the resurrection. His words teach absolutely the absence from the resurrection life of the definite physical relations on which marriage rests in this, and they suggest an answer to the yearning questions which rise up in our minds as we ponder on the things behind the veil. Will there, we ask, be no continuance there of the holiest of the ties of earth? Will the husband and the wife, who have loved each other until death parted them, be no more to each other than any others who are counted worthy to obtain that life? Will there be no individual recognition, no continuance of the love founded upon the memories of the past? The answer to all such questionings is found in dwelling on the "power of God." The old relations may subsist under new conditions. Things that are incompatible here may there be found to co-exist. The saintly wife of two saintly husbands may love both with an angelic, and therefore a pure and unimpaired, affection. The contrast between our Lord's teaching and the sensual paradise of Mahomet, or Swedenborg's dream of the marriage state perpetuated

angels which are in heaven.

(26) And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, *I am* the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac,

a Matt.
22. 35.

and the God of Jacob? (27) He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err.

(28) And one of the scribes came,^a and having heard them reasoning together,

under its earthly conditions, is so obvious as hardly to call for notice.

(26) **Have ye not read . . . ?**—There are, it need scarcely be said, many passages scattered here and there through the Old Testament (such, *e.g.*, as Job xix. 25, 26; Ps. xvi. 10, 11; Dan. xii. 2) in which the hope of immortality, and even of a resurrection, is expressed with greater clearness; but our Lord meets the Sadducees on their own ground, and quotes from the Law which they recognised as of supreme authority. The principle implied in the reasoning is, that the union of the divine Name with that of a man, as in "I am the God of Abraham," involved a relation existing, not in the past only, but when the words were uttered. They meant something more than "I am the God whom Abraham worshipped in the past." But if the relation was a permanent one, then it followed that those whose names were thus joined with the name of God were living and not dead.

How in the bush God spake unto him.—Better, *at the bush, how God spake to him.* The reference to the bush, not given by St. Matthew, is common both to St. Mark and St. Luke, and the order of the words in the Greek of

both shows that they point to "the bush," not as the place in which God spoke, but as the title or heading by which the section Ex. iii. was commonly described. The words "ye therefore do greatly err" are, it may be noted, peculiar to St. Mark.

(28) **And one of the scribes came.**—St. Mark's description is somewhat less precise than St. Matthew's: "one of them (*i.e.*, the Pharisees), a lawyer." The form of the question differs by the substitution of "first of all" for "great" commandment. The precise distinction between the "lawyer" and the other scribes rested, probably, on technicalities, like those that distinguish law and equity in English jurisprudence, that have left little or no trace behind them. The word suggests the thought of a section of the scribes who confined their attention to the Law, while the others included in their studies the writings of the Prophets also. In Luke vii. 30, xi. 45, they appear as distinct from the Pharisees. The question asked by the "lawyer" here and in Luke x. 25 falls in with this view. So it would seem, in Tit. iii. 13, that Zenas the "lawyer" was sent for to settle the strivings about the Law that prevailed in Crete.

There does not appear to have

and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all ?
⁽³⁰⁾ And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O

Israel ; The Lord our God is one Lord : ⁽³⁰⁾ and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength : this is the

been in this instance any hostile purpose in the mind of the questioner ; nor does the word "tempting" used by St. Matthew (xxii. 35) necessarily imply it. (Comp. John vi. 6, 2 Cor. xiii. 5, where it is used in the sense of "trying," "examining.") It would seem, indeed, as if our Lord's refutation of the Sadducees had drawn out a certain measure of sympathy and reverence from those whose minds were not hardened in hypocrisy. They came now to test His teaching on other points. What answer would He give to the much-debated question of the schools, as to which was the great commandment of the Law ? Would He fix on circumcision, or the Sabbath, or tithes, or sacrifice, as that which held the place of pre-eminence ? The fact that they thus, as it were, examined Him as if they were His judges, showed an utterly imperfect recognition of His claims as a Prophet and as the Christ ; but the "lawyer" who appeared as their representative was, at least, honest in his purpose, and "not far from the kingdom of God" (verse 34).

Which is the first commandment . . . ?—Literally, of what kind. The questioner asked as if it belonged to a class. Our Lord's answer is definite, "This is the first and great commandment."

⁽³⁰⁾ Hear, O Israel ; The

Lord our God is one Lord. —The quotation is given more fully by St. Mark than by St. Matthew. The opening words (from Deut. vi. 4) were in common use under the name of the *Shemà* (the Hebrew for "Hear"), and formed the popular expression of the faith of Israel. To say the *Shemà* was a passport into Paradise for any child of Abraham.

⁽³⁰⁾ Thou shalt love the Lord thy God.—It is significant (1) that the answer comes from the same chapter (Deut. vi. 4, 5) which supplied our Lord with two out of His three answers to the Tempter (see Matt. iv. 4, 7) ; and (2) that He does but repeat the answer that had been given before by the "certain lawyer" who stood up tempting Him, in Luke x. 25. In their ethical teaching the Pharisees had grasped the truth intellectually, though they did not realise it in their lives, and our Lord did not shrink, therefore, so far, from identifying His teaching with theirs. Truth was truth, even though it was held by the Pharisees and coupled with hypocrisy.

With all thy heart.—The English version is not wrong, but there is a force in the Greek idiom, "out of all thy heart," which should not be passed over. The accumulation of words implies the entire devotion of every element of our

first commandment. ⁽³¹⁾ And the second *is* like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love Thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. ⁽³²⁾ And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he: ⁽³³⁾ and to love him with all the heart,

and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love *his* neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. ⁽³⁴⁾ And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after

spiritual being to God; and any subtle metaphysical analysis of the meaning of each single phrase would here be out of place.

⁽³¹⁾ And the second is like, *namely*, this . . .—Better, *And the second is this*. The better MSS. omit "like."

Thou shalt love thy neighbour.—The words were found, strangely enough, in the book which is, for the most part, pre-eminently ceremonial (Lev. xix. 18), and it is to the credit of the Pharisees, as ethical teachers, that they too had drawn the Law, as our Lord now drew it, from its comparative obscurity, and had given it a place of dignity second only to that of the first and great commandment.

⁽³²⁾ Well, Master, thou hast said the truth.—Better, *Well hast thou said truly that there is one God*. The words seem intentionally repeated from verse 14, but are uttered now, not with the covert sneer of the hypocrite, but in the sincerity of admiration. Note also the real reverence shown in the form of address, "Master," i.e., "Teacher, Rabbi." He recognises the speaker as one of his own order.

This, and all that follows, is peculiar to St. Mark, and is an addition of singular interest, as showing the existence among the scribes of some who accepted our Lord's teaching as to the spiritual meaning of the Law, and were able to distinguish between its essence and its accidents. (Comp. Luke x. 25.)

⁽³³⁾ Is more than all whole burnt offerings . . .—There is a fervour in the eloquence of the scribe's answer which indicates the earnestness, almost the enthusiasm, of conviction. Such teaching as that of 1 Sam. xv. 22, Ps. l. 8—14, li. 16, 17, Mic. vi. 6, had not been in vain for him.

⁽³⁴⁾ Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.—The words are significant as showing the unity of our Lord's teaching. Now, as when He spoke the Sermon on the Mount, the righteousness which fulfils the law is the condition of the entrance into the kingdom of God (Matt. v. 19, 20). Even the recognition of that righteousness as consisting in the fulfilment of the two commandments that were exceeding broad, brought a man as to the very threshold of the King-

that durst ask him *any* question.

⁽³⁵⁾ And Jesus answered and said,^a while he taught in the temple, How say the

^a Matt. 22. 41.

scribes that Christ is the son of David? ⁽³⁶⁾ For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The LORD said to my Lord, Sit thou on

dom. It is instructive to compare our Lord's different method of dealing, in Luke x. 25—37, with one who had the same theoretical knowledge, but who obviously, consciously or unconsciously, minimised the force of the commandments by his narrowing definitions. Here also we may well believe that "Jesus, beholding him, loved him" (chap. x. 21).

And no man after that durst ask him.—St. Mark states the fact before, St. Matthew (xxii. 46) after, the narrative that now follows.

⁽³⁵⁾ **While he taught in the temple.**—The locality is named by St. Mark only, but it is all but implied in the other two Gospels. It was now His turn to appear as the questioner, and to convict the Pharisees of resting on the mere surface even of the predictions which they quoted most frequently and most confidently as Messianic.

The son of David.—Both question and answer gain a fresh significance from the fact that the name had been so recently uttered in the Hosannas of the multitude (Matt. xxi. 9, 15). The Pharisees are ready at once with the traditional answer; but they have never asked themselves whether it conveyed the whole truth, whether it could be reconciled, and if so, how, with the language of predictions that were confessedly Messianic.

⁽³⁶⁾ **David himself said by the Holy Ghost.**—St. Mark is more emphatic in ascribing the

words of David to the influence of the Holy Spirit than either St. Matthew, who simply quotes, or St. Luke, who uses the more general phrase "in spirit." Comp. 2 Pet. i. 21. The words assume (1) that David was the writer of Psalm cx.; (2) that in writing it he was guided by a Spirit higher than his own; (3) that the subject of it was no earthly king of the house of David, but the far-off Christ. On this point there was an undisturbed *consensus* among the schools of Judaism, as represented by the Targums and the Talmud. It was a received tradition that the Christ should sit on the right hand of Jehovah and Abraham on His left. Its application to the Christ is emphatically recognised by St. Peter (Acts ii. 34), and by St. Paul, though indirectly (1 Cor. xv. 25; Col. iii. 1). In the argument of the Epistle to the Hebrews it occupies well-nigh the chief place of all (Heb. i. 3; v. 6). The only hypothesis on which any other meaning can be assigned to it is, that it was written, not by David, but of him. Here it will be enough to accept our Lord's interpretation, and to track the sequence of thought in His question. The words represent the LORD (*Jehovah*) as speaking to David's Lord (*Adonai*), as the true king, the anointed of Jehovah, calling Him to share His throne, and promising that He should be victorious over all His foes. But if so, what was the meaning of that

my right hand, till I make
thine enemies thy footstool.

(37) David therefore himself
callesh him Lord; and
whence is he *then* his son?
And the common people
heard him gladly.

^a Matt.
23. 5.

(38) And he said unto
them in his doctrine, Be-
ware of the scribes, which
love to go in long clothing,^a
and love salutations in the
marketplaces, (39) and the
chief seats in the syna-

lofty title? Must not He who bore
it be something more than the son
of David by mere natural descent?
If the scribes had never even asked
themselves that question, were they
not self-convicted of incompetency
as religious teachers?

(37) **And the common people.**
—Better, *the great body of the people*.
Stress is laid on the multitude, not
on the social condition, of those who
thus heard gladly.

(38) **In his doctrine.**—Better, *in
His teaching*. St. Mark's report is
characteristically brief as compared
with St. Matthew, and would seem
to have been drawn from the same
source as St. Luke's (xx. 45—47).
Now, as in Matt. xv. 10, but here
more fully and emphatically, our
Lord not only reproves the hypo-
crisy of the Pharisees, but warns the
multitude against them. He ap-
peals, as it were, to the unperverted
conscience of the people, as against
the perversions of their guides. In
some points, as, *e.g.*, in verse 16—
21, it presents a striking parallel to
the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v.
33—37). Our Lord closes His public
teaching, as He began it, by a protest
against that false casuistry which
had substituted the traditions of men
for the commandments of God.

**That love to go in long
clothing.**—Better, *that wish to
walk in robes*, as contrasted with
the simple "tunic" (χιτών) and

"cloak" (ἱμάτιον) of our Lord and
His disciples. This was, as it were,
the ambition of the scribes. It
was their wish, and therefore their
wont, to walk to and fro in the
streets of Jerusalem in all the pa-
rade of their calling—in what we
should call their "robes of office."
St. Mark's omission of the "phy-
lacteries" of Matt. xxiii. 5 is, per-
haps, explained by the fact that
he was writing for Gentile readers
who would not understand the word.

**Salutations in the market-
places.**—These were often of
the nature of prolix compliments,
and of titles such as Rabbi, Rab-
boni, Abba, and the like. Here
again the practice which our Lord
had enjoined on His disciples
(Luke x. 4) was in marked con-
trast to that of the Scribes.

(39) **The chief seats in the
synagogue.**—These were the
stalls near the ark or chest in
which the scrolls of the Law were
kept, which were reserved com-
monly for persons of distinction.
(Comp. James ii. 2, 3).

**The uppermost rooms at
feasts.**—Better, *chief places*, or,
more literally, *chief couches*. These
were those nearest the master of
the house, as in the case of St.
John at the Last Supper (John xiii.
23). In Luke xiv. 7, we have an
instance of the actual working of
this conspicuous love of precedency.

gogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts: ⁽⁴⁰⁾ which devour widows' houses,^a and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation.

⁽⁴¹⁾ And Jesus sat over

^a Matt. 23. 14.
^b Luke 21. 1.
¹ A piece of brass money: See Matt. 10. 9.
² It is the seventh part of one piece of

that brass money.

against the treasury,^b and beheld how the people cast money¹ into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. ⁽⁴²⁾ And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites,²

⁽⁴⁰⁾ Which devour widows' houses.—Here the word has a special force as coming after the mention of the feasts. They seek the highest places at such banquets, our Lord seems to say, and when there, this is what they feast on. The avarice thus described may have attained its end either (1) by using the advantages which they possessed, as the jurists and notaries of the time, to press unjust claims against wealthy widows, or to become their heirs; or (2) by leading devout women, under the show of piety, to bestow on them their estates or houses. To minister to the maintenance of a scribe was, they taught, the best use of wealth. The "long prayers" refers probably to the well-known Eighteen Prayers which formed the standard of the Pharisee's devotion. The relative pronoun of the English version gives a wrong idea of the construction. We have really a new sentence. *They that devour . . . these shall receive . . .*"

⁽⁴¹⁾ And Jesus sat over against the treasury.—The narrative that follows is found in St. Luke also, but not in St. Matthew. The word used for "treasury" is not the "Corban" of Matt. xxvii. 6, and is, perhaps, more definitely local. The treasure-chamber of the Temple would re-

ceive the alms which were dropped into the trumpet-shaped vessels of bronze or copper, known as the *Shopherim*, that stood near the entrance for the purpose of receiving them; but it probably contained also the cups and other implements of gold and silver that were used in the Temple ritual.

Cast money into.—The word indicates primarily copper or bronze coin, but probably, like the French *argent*, had acquired a wider range of meaning.

⁽⁴²⁾ And there came a certain poor widow.—The position of the narrative gives to the description all the vividness of contrast. Among the "many" who cast in much must have been some at least of the Pharisees who devoured widows' houses. Here was a widow whose house had been devoured, if not by them, yet by the changes and chances of her life, and who yet showed by her act that she kept the two great commandments, which the scribes themselves declared to be above all burnt offering and sacrifices (verses 32, 33).

Two mites, which make a farthing.—The "farthing" is one of the Latin words which characterise this Gospel, and represents the *quadrans*, or fourth part of a Roman *as*. The primary meaning

which make a farthing.
 (43) And he called *unto him* his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: (44) for all *they*

A.D. 33.

"Matt.
24. 1.

did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, *even* all her living.

CHAPTER XIII.—

(1) And as he went out of the temple,^a one of his

of the word rendered "mite" is "thin" or "tiny." The English word has indeed the same force, being contracted from the Latin *minutum*. In Wicliff's version we find the word uncontracted, "two minutys" (=minutes), the word which we now connect exclusively with a small measure of time having then a wider application.

(43) And he called *unto him* his disciples.—The act was significant. He sought to teach them to judge of acts by other than a quantitative standard. For him the widow's mites and the ointment that might have been sold for 300 pence (chap. xiv. 5) stood on the same level, so far as each was the expression of a generous and self-sacrificing love.

(44) They did cast in of their abundance . . . she of her want.—The contrast between the two Greek words is somewhat stronger: *They of their superfluity . . . she of her deficiency*. We recognise the same standard of judgment, possibly even an allusive reference to our Lord's language, in St. Paul's praises of the churches of Macedonia, whose "deep poverty" had "abounded unto the riches of their liberality" (2 Cor. viii. 1—2).

Even all her living.—This was not necessarily involved in the

act itself, but the woman may have become known to our Lord in one of His previous visits to Jerusalem, or we may see in the statement an instance of His divine insight into the lives and characters of men, like that shown in the case of the woman of Samaria (John iv. 18). This, it may be, was her whole daily wage, or all that had been doled out to her, and this she gave.

XIII.

(1) One of his disciples.—Note St. Mark's vivid way of giving the very words of the disciple, instead of saying, with St. Matthew, that they "came to show" the buildings of the Temple.

Here, again, the juxtaposition of narratives in St. Mark gives them a special point. The "stones" of Herod's Temple (for it was to him chiefly that it owed its magnificence, John ii. 20) were of sculptured marble. The "buildings," or structures, included columns, chambers, porticoes, that were, as St. Luke tells us (xxi. 5), the votive offerings of the faithful. The disciples gazed on these with the natural admiration of Galilean peasants. In spite of the lesson they had just received—a lesson meant, it may be, to correct the tendency which our Lord discerned—they were still measuring things by their quantity and size.

disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings *are here!* ⁽²⁾ And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon

another, that shall not be thrown down. ⁽³⁾ And as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, ⁽⁴⁾ Tell us, when shall these things

They admired the "goodly stones" more than the "widow's mite." They were now to be taught that, while the one should be spoken of throughout the whole world, the other should be destroyed, so that not a vestige should remain. We cannot say who spoke the words, but it is at least probable that it came from one of the four who are named in verse 3. In St. Matthew's report, however, they had heard other words, suggesting far other thoughts that may have mingled with their admiration. "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" (Matt. xxiii. 38). Might not the sight of those glories lead their Master to recall the terrible words? Could he doom that "beautiful house" to so utter a desolation?

⁽²⁾ **There shall not be left one stone upon another.**—So Josephus relates that Titus ordered the whole city and the Temple to be dug up, leaving only two or three of the chief towers, so that those who visited it could hardly believe that it had ever been inhabited (*Wars*, vii. 1). The remains which recent explorations have disinterred belong, all of them, to the substructure of the Temple—its drains, foundations, underground passages, and the like. The words fell on the ears

of the disciples, and awed them into silence. It was not till they had crossed the Mount of Olives that even the foremost and most favoured ventured to break it.

⁽³⁾ **Over against the temple.**—The view which the position commanded, and which St. Mark alone mentions, made all that followed more vivid and impressive. It may well have been at or near the very spot at which, a few days before, He had paused as "He beheld the city and wept over it" (Luke xix. 41).

Peter and James and John and Andrew.—The list of names is noticeable (1) as being given by St. Mark only; (2) as the only instance in which the name of Andrew appears in conjunction with the three who were on other occasions within the inner circle of companionship; (3) in the position given to Andrew, though the first called of the disciples (John i. 41), as the last in the list.

⁽⁴⁾ **When shall these things be?**—The question is two-fold. The first clause refers simply to the destruction of the Temple of which the Lord had just spoken. The second points to a sign of some greater accomplishment of all that they connected with that destruction. It answered to St. Matthew's form of the question (xxiv. 3),

be?^a and what *shall* be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled? ⁽⁵⁾ And Jesus answering them began to say, Take heed lest any *man* deceive you: ⁽⁶⁾ for many shall come in

^a Matt.
24. 3.

my name, saying, I am *Christ*; and shall deceive many. ⁽⁷⁾ And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled: for *such things* must needs be; but

“What shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world?” (Better, *the completion of the age*.)

⁽⁵⁾ And Jesus answering them began to say.—The report which follows, common as it is to the first three Gospels, serves as an admirable example of the extent of variation compatible with substantial accuracy, and with the recognition of an inspired guidance as ensuring that accuracy. The discourse obviously made a deep impression on those who heard it, as afterwards on those to whom they repeated it, and so it passed from mouth to mouth, but probably it was not committed to writing till the events which it foretold came within the horizon. In all probability the written record came, in the first instance, from the lips of St. Peter, and it will accordingly be instructive to compare its eschatology, or “teaching as to the last things,” with that which we find in his discourses and epistles. St. Paul’s reference to “the day of the Lord” coming “as a thief in the night” (Matt. xxiv. 43; 1 Thess. v. 2) suggests the inference that its substance had become known at a comparatively early date; but it was probably not published, *i.e.*, not thrown as a document into circulation, among Christian Jews, till the time was near when its

warnings would be needed; and this may, in part, account for the variations with which it then appeared, and which show, once for all, as in a crucial instance, that inspiration, though it may limit, does not prevent the ever-varying fluctuations of human memory.

⁽⁶⁾ Many shall come in my name.—No direct fulfilments of this prediction are recorded, either in the New Testament, or by Josephus, or other historians. Bar-Cochba (the “son of the star”), who claimed to be the “Star” of the prophecy of Balaam (Num. xxiv. 17), is often named as a fulfilment; but he did not appear till A.D. 120—nearly 50 years *after* the destruction of Jerusalem. In the excited fanaticism of the time, however, it was likely enough that such pretenders should arise and disappear, after each had lived out his little day, and fill no place in history. The “many antichrists,” *i.e.*, rival Christs, of 1 John ii. 18, may point to such phenomena; possibly, also, the prophecy of 2 Thess. ii. 4. Theudas (the later rebel of that name—not the one named in Acts v. 36, but by Josephus, *Ant.* xx. 5), or “the Egyptian” of Acts xxi. 38, may possibly have mingled Messianic claims with their pretensions, but there is no evidence of it.

I am Christ.—Literally, *I am*,

the end *shall* not be yet.

⁽⁸⁾ For nation shall rise against nation, and king-

dom against kingdom:

and there shall be earthquakes in divers places,

the word Christ being a necessary inference from the context. In the original of St. Matt. xxiv. 5 it is "*the Christ*." The words point, perhaps, to the peculiar and significant manner in which our Lord from time to time uttered the solemn affirmation, "I am" (John viii. 58; Mark xiv. 62). The pronoun is emphatic as pointing to the self-asserting egotism of the Messianic pretenders.

Wars and rumours.—St. Luke adds "commotions." The forty years that intervened before the destruction of Jerusalem were full of these in all directions; but we may probably think of the words as referring specially to wars, actual or threatened, that affected the Jews, such, *e.g.*, as those of which we read under Caligula, Claudius, and Nero (Jos. *Ant.* xx. 1, 6). The title which the historian gave to his second book, "The Wars of the Jews," is sufficiently suggestive. As the years passed on, the watchwords, "Be not troubled," "The end is not yet," must have kept the believers in Christ calm in the midst of agitation. They were not to think that the end was to follow at once upon the wars which were preparing the way for it.

For such things must needs be.—Better, *for it must needs be*. Some of the better MSS. omit the conjunction "for."

⁽⁸⁾ Nation shall rise against nation.—Some of the more memorable of these are recorded by Josephus: one at Seleucia, in which 50,000 Jews are said to have

perished (*Ant.* xviii. 9, §§ 8, 9); others at Cæsarea, Scythopolis, Joppa, Ascalon, and Tyre (*Wars*, ii. 18); and the memorable conflict between Jews and Greeks at Alexandria, under Caligula, A.D. 38, of which we learn from Philo. The whole period was, indeed, marked by tumults of this kind.

Earthquakes in divers places.—Perhaps no period in the world's history has ever been so marked by these convulsions as that which intervenes between the Crucifixion and the destruction of Jerusalem. Josephus records one in Judæa (*Wars*, iv. 4, § 5); Tacitus tells of them in Crete, Rome, Apamea, Phrygia, Campania (*Ann.* xii. 58; xiv. 27; xv. 22); Seneca (*Ep.* 91), in A.D. 58, speaks of them as extending their devastations over Asia (the proconsular province, not the continent), Achaia, Syria, and Macedonia.

Famines.—Of these we know that of which Agabus prophesied (Acts xi. 28), and which was felt severely, in the ninth year of Claudius, not only in Syria, but in Rome (Jos. *Ant.* xx. 2). Suetonius (*Claud.* c. 18) speaks of the reign of that emperor as marked by "continual scarcity." The words that follow, "and troubles," are wanting from some of the best MSS.

The beginnings of sorrows.—The words mean strictly, *the beginning of travail pangs*. The troubles through which the world passes are thought of as issuing in a "new birth"—the "regenera-

and there shall be famines and troubles: these *are* the beginnings of sorrows.¹

⁽⁹⁾ But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils;

¹ The word in the original importeth the pains of a woman in travail.

and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them. ⁽¹⁰⁾ And the gospel must first be pub-

tion" of Matt. xix. 28. So St. Paul speaks of the whole creation as "travailing in pain together" (Rom. viii. 22). So a time of national suffering and perplexity is one in which "the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth" (Isa. xxxvii. 3).

⁽⁹⁾ But take heed to yourselves.—The emphatic repetition of the warning is peculiar to St. Mark (comp. verse 23). The description of the sufferings of the disciples (verses 9—13) is found in Luke xxi. 12 and in Matt. x. 17—22, but not in St. Matthew's report of this discourse.

To councils.—The plural shows that our Lord referred, not to the Great Council or Sanhedrin at Jerusalem, but to the lesser councils connected with provincial synagogues that had power to judge and punish persons accused of offences against religion.

And in the synagogues ye shall be beaten.—The more natural construction of the sentence would be, *Ye shall be delivered to councils and to synagogues; ye shall be beaten.* . . . The words, as they stand, imply the actual infliction of the punishment within the walls of the building. To us this appears something like desecration, but there is no reason for thinking that it did so to the Jews, and St. Paul's lan-

guage in Acts xxii. 19, xxvi. 11, seems to place the fact beyond the shadow of a doubt. To those who thought that in so punishing men they were doing God service (John xvi. 2) there would seem nothing strange in such an act. The stripes of which the Apostle speaks in 2 Cor. xi. 24 were probably thus and there inflicted.

Ye shall be brought before rulers and kings.—The words are significant as looking forward (if we assume the unity of the discourse) to that future work among the Gentiles upon which the Twelve had been told (Matt. x. 5) that they were not as yet to enter. "Rulers" stands always in the New Testament for the governors (proconsuls, procurators, and others) of the Roman Empire. "Kings" at least includes, even if it does not primarily indicate, the emperors themselves.

Against them.—Rather, *unto them*. The word is simply the dative of the person to whom we address our testimony, not involving necessarily any hostile or even reproving purpose.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Be published among all nations.—The words answer to "all the world" (literally, *the inhabited earth*, as in Luke ii. 1; Acts xi. 28); in St. Matthew's report (xxiv. 14) *i.e.*, throughout the Roman empire; and it was true,

lished among all nations.

(11) But when they shall lead *you*,^a and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be

^a Matt.
10. 19.

given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost. (12) Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children

as a matter of fact, that there was hardly a province of the empire in which the faith of Christ had not been preached before the destruction of Jerusalem. Special attention should be given to St. Mark's words, "preached unto all the nations," i.e., to all the Gentiles, as an implicit sanction of the work of which St. Paul was afterwards the great representative. So taken, the words agree with the mention of "rulers" and "kings" in the previous verse, and prepare the way for the great mission of Matt. xxviii. 19.

(11) **Take no thought.**—In the same sense as in Matt. vi. 25, "*Do not be over-anxious.*" The second clause "neither do ye premeditate" is wanting in many MSS. and versions. The words indicate an almost tender sympathy with the feelings of Galilean disciples, "unlearned and ignorant men" (Acts iv. 13) standing before those who were counted so much their superiors in power and knowledge. The words that follow contain a two-fold promise; not only *what* they should say, but *how*, in what form and phrase, to say it, should be given them in that hour. The courage of Peter and John before the Sanhedrin is at once the earliest and the most striking instance of the fulfilment of the promise given here (Acts iv. 13).

It is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.—In the parallel passage of Matt. x. 20 we have, "the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." In Luke xxi. 15, "I will give you a mouth and wisdom." St. Mark's use of the more definite term reminds us of chap. xii. 36 (where see Note), and may, probably, be connected with St. Peter's habitual language. (Comp. Acts ii. 33—38; viii. 15; x. 47; 2 Pet. i. 21.) He was to think of himself and of his fellow-disciples as receiving as real an inspiration as Psalmists and Prophets had received. The "prophetic word" was to dwell with them also (2 Pet. i. 19). It would be obviously beside the drift of our Lord's discourse to make this promise of special aid in moments of special danger the groundwork of a theory of inspiration as affecting the written records of the work of the disciples. "The Spirit divideth to every man severally as He wills" (1 Cor. xii. 11), according to the necessities of character and circumstances.

(12) **Now the brother.**—Literally, *and the brother*. The nouns are in the Greek without the article, *brother shall deliver up brother*, and are thus, perhaps, more forcible as statements of what should happen often. Our English idiom,

shall rise up against *their* parents, and shall cause them to be put to death.
 (13) And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's

sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

(14) But when ye shall see the abomination of

however, allows the use of the article with nearly the same meaning. The words reproduce almost verbally the prophecy of Mic. vii. 6, and are there followed by the prophet's expression of his faith, "Therefore I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation," answering to the "endurance" of which our Lord speaks in the next verse.

(13) **Hated of all men for my name's sake.**—Here, as before, the words sketch out the history of the persecution with a precision which marks and attests the divine foreknowledge. From the days of Stephen to that of the last martyr under Diocletian it was always as a Christian and for the name of Christ that men thus suffered. Would they but renounce that, all would have gone smoothly with them. As Tertullian said of the sufferers of his day, "We are tortured when we confess our guilt, we are set free if we deny it, for the battle is about a Name" (*Apol.* c. 2). (Comp. 1 Pet. iv. 16.)

He that shall endure unto the end . . .—The words have at once a higher and lower, a wider and a narrower, sense. Endurance to the end of life is in every case the condition of salvation, in the full meaning of the word. But the context rather leads us to see in the "end" the close of the period of which our Lord speaks, *i.e.*, the destruction of Jerusalem; and so

the words "shall be saved" at least include deliverance from the doom of those who were involved in that destruction.

(14) **But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation.**—The words, as they stand in Dan. xii. 11, seem to refer to the desecration of the sanctuary by the mad attempt of Antiochus Epiphanes to stop the "daily sacrifice," and to substitute an idolatrous worship in its place (2 Macc. vi. 1—9). What analogous desecration our Lord's words point to is a question that has received very different answers. We may at once narrow the range of choice by remembering (1) that it is before the destruction of the Temple, and therefore cannot be the presence of the plundering troops, or of the eagles of the legions in it; (2) that the "abomination" stands in the "Holy Place," and therefore it cannot be identified with the appearance of the Roman eagles in the lines of the besieging legions under Cestius, A.D. 68. The answer is probably to be found in the faction-fights, the murders and outrages, the profane consecration of usurping priests, which the Jewish historian describes so fully (*Jos. Wars*, iv. 6, §§ 6—8). The Zealots had got possession of the Temple at an early stage in the siege, and profaned it by these and other like outrages; they made the Holy Place (in the very words of the historian) "a garrison and

desolation," spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let

<sup>a Matt.
24. 29</sup>

him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judæa flee to the

stronghold" of their tyrannous and lawless rule; while the better priests looked on from afar, and wept tears of horror. The mysterious prediction of 2 Thess. ii. 4 may point, in the first instance, to some kindred "abomination."

The words "spoken of by Daniel the prophet" have been urged as absolutely decisive of the questions that have been raised as to the authorship of the book that bears the name of that prophet. This is not the place to discuss those questions, but it is well in all cases not to put upon words a strain which they will scarcely bear. It has been urged, with some degree of reasonableness, that a reference of this kind was necessarily made to the book as commonly received and known, and that critical questions of this kind, as in reference to David as the writer of the Psalms, or Moses as the author of the books commonly ascribed to him, lay altogether outside the scope of our Lord's teaching. The questions themselves had not been then raised, and were not present to the thoughts either of the hearers or the readers of His prophetic warnings. The clause itself is, indeed, wanting in many MSS. and versions.

Standing where it ought not.—St. Mark substitutes this for "in the holy place" of St. Matthew. Of the two, the former seems, in its enigmatic form, more likely to have been the phrase actually used; the latter to have been an explanation. St. Luke

(xxi. 20), probably again as wishing to explain the mysterious phrase to his Gentile readers, gives the paraphrase "when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed about by armies."

Let him that readeth understand.—The words have been supposed by some commentators to have been a marginal note in the first written report of the discourse, calling attention to this special prediction on account of its practical bearing on the action of the disciples of Christ at the time. There appears, however, to be no sufficient reason why they should not be received as part of the discourse itself, bidding one who read the words of Daniel to ponder over their meaning till he learnt to recognise their fulfilment in the events that should pass before his eyes. The fact that they are found in both St. Matthew's and St. Mark's reports is in favour of this view.

Then let them that be in Judæa.—The words were acted on when the time came. Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.* iii. 5) records that the Christians of Judæa, acting "on a certain oracle," fled, in A.D. 68, to Pella, a town on the northern boundary of Peræa. So Josephus (*Wars*, iv. 9, § 1; v. 10, § 1) more generally relates that many of the more conspicuous citizens fled from the city, as men abandon a sinking ship. The "mountains" may be named generally as a place of refuge, or may point, as interpreted by the event, to the Gilead range of hills on the east of Jordan.

mountains : ⁽¹⁵⁾ and let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, neither enter *therein*, to take any thing out of his house : ⁽¹⁶⁾ and let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment. ⁽¹⁷⁾ But woe to them that are with

child, and to them that give suck in those days ! ⁽¹⁸⁾ And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter. ⁽¹⁹⁾ For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be. ⁽²⁰⁾ And

⁽¹⁵⁾ Let him that is on the house-top.—The houses in the streets of Jerusalem, as in most Eastern cities, were built in a continuous line, and with flat roofs, so that a man might pass from house to house without descending into the courtyard, or entering any of the rooms that opened into it, until he came to some point near the wall or gate of the city, and so make his escape. At a moment of danger (in this case, probably, that arising from the factions within the city, rather than the invaders without) any delay might prove fatal. Men were to escape as though their life were “given them for a prey” (Jer. xlv. 5), without thinking of their goods or chattels.

⁽¹⁶⁾ To take up his garment.—Better, in the singular, *his cloak*. The man would be working in the field with the short tunic of the labouring peasant, leaving the flowing outer garment at home in the city. Here also the flight was to be rapid and immediate.

⁽¹⁷⁾ Woe to them.—Better, *alas for them, or woe for them*. The tone is that of pity rather than denunciation. The hardships of a hurried flight would press most heavily on those who were encum-

bered with infant children, or were expecting childbirth. The same tenderness of sympathy shows itself in the words spoken to the daughters of Jerusalem in Luke xxiii. 28, 29. Perhaps the words point to the darker horrors of the siege, when mothers were driven, in the frenzy of starvation, to feed on their infant's flesh (Jos. Wars, vi. 3, § 4).

⁽¹⁸⁾ Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter.—Note St. Mark's omission of “nor on the Sabbath day,” which is prominent in St. Matthew's report, as characteristic of a Gospel for Gentile readers. The words “your flight” are wanting in many MSS., and the clause stands “Pray that it be not in the winter.” The cold and rain of that season would obviously aggravate all the hardships of such a flight as that described for the half-clad and half-fed fugitives, and it was a legitimate matter for prayer that they might be spared that aggravation.

⁽¹⁹⁾ From the beginning of the creation which God created.—Note the fuller form which replaces St. Matthew's “from the beginning of the world,” and the recurrence of the same phrase in 2 Pet. iii. 4.

⁽²⁰⁾ No flesh should be

except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days. ⁽²¹⁾ And then if any man shall say to you,^a Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, he is there;

^a Matt.
24. 23.

believe him not: ⁽²²⁾ for false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect. ⁽²³⁾ But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things.

saved.—The words are of course limited by the context to the scene of the events to which the prophecy refers. The warfare with foes outside the city, and the faction-fights and massacres within, would have caused an utter depopulation of the whole country.

For the elect's sake.—Those who, as believers in Jesus, were the "remnant" of the visible Israel, and therefore the true Israel of God. It was for the sake of the Christians of Judæa, and not for that of the rebellious Jews, that the war was not protracted, and that Titus, under the outward influences of Josephus and Bernice, tempered his conquests with compassion (*Ant.* xii. 3, § 2; *Wars*, vi. 9, § 2). The new prominence which the idea of an election gains in our Lord's later teaching is every way remarkable. (Comp. Matt. xviii. 7; xx. 6.) The "call" had been wide; in those who received and obeyed it He taught men to recognise the "elect" whom God had chosen. Subtle questions as to whether the choice rested on foreknowledge or was absolutely arbitrary, lay, if we may reverently so speak, outside the scope of His teaching. The "Lord" who would shorten the days is obviously the Jehovah of the Old Testament, and not the

Lord Jesus who speaks the words.

⁽²¹⁾ **Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, he is there.**—Better, *Lo, here is the Christ*. The narrative of Josephus, while speaking of many "deceivers" claiming divine authority (*Wars*, ii. 13, § 4), is silent as to any pretenders to the character of the Messiah. It is scarcely conceivable, however, that this should not have been one of the results of the fevered dreams of the people, and the reticence of the historian was probably a *suppressio veri* connected with his own recognition of Vespasian as a *quasi* Christ (*Wars*, vi. 5, § 4).

⁽²²⁾ **Shall shew signs and wonders.**—Simon Magus (*Acts* viii. 9—11) and Elymas (*Acts* xiii. 6) may be taken as representative instances of these false claimants to supernatural powers. So "signs and lying wonders" are the notes of the coming of the Wicked One, in whom the mystery of iniquity shall receive its full development (2 Thess. ii. 9). But for the warning thus given, even the "elect"—i.e., the Christians of Judæa and Jerusalem—might have been carried away by the current of popular delusions.

⁽²³⁾ **Take ye heed.**—The repetition of the warning word,

(21) But in those days,^a ^{a Matt. 24. 21} sun shall be darkened, and after that tribulation, the moon shall not give

as in verse 9, is peculiar to St. Mark.

(24) But in those days.—From this point onwards the prophecy takes a wider range, and passes beyond the narrow limits of the destruction of Jerusalem to the final coming of the Son of Man, and the one is represented in St. Matthew's report (xxiv. 29) as following "immediately" on the other. No other meaning could have been found in the words when they were first heard or read. The "days" of this verse are those which were shortened "for the elect's sake" (verse 20). The "tribulation" can be none other than that of verse 19, which was emphatically connected with the flight of men from the beleaguered city. The language of St. Mark, "*in those days, after that tribulation,*" followed by a description of the second Advent identical in substance with St. Matthew's, brings the two events, if possible, into yet closer juxtaposition. How are we to explain the fact that already more than eighteen centuries have rolled away, and "the promise of His coming" still tarrys? It is a partial answer to the question to say that God's measurements of time are not as man's, and that with Him "a thousand years are as one day" (2 Pet. iii. 8); that there is that in God which answers to the modification of a purpose in man, and now postpones, now hastens, the unfolding of His plan, that His long-suffering patience may lead men to repentance. But that which may seem the boldest answer

is also (in the judgment of the present writer) that which seems the truest and most reverential. Of that "day and hour" knew no man, "not even the Son" (verse 32), "but the Father only;" and therefore He, as truly man, and as having therefore vouchsafed to accept the limitations of knowledge incident to man's nature, speaks of the two events as poets and prophets speak of the far-off future. As men gazing from a distance see the glittering heights of two snow-crowned mountains apparently in close proximity, and take no account of the vast tract, it may be of very many miles, which lies between them; so it was that those whose thoughts must have been mainly moulded on this prediction, the Apostles and their immediate disciples, though they were too conscious of their ignorance of "the times and the seasons" to fix the day or year, lived and died in the expectation that it was not far off, and that they might, by prayer and acts, hasten its coming (2 Pet. iii. 12).

The sun shall be darkened.—The words reproduce the imagery in which Isaiah had described the day of the Lord's judgment upon Babylon (Isa. xiii. 10), and may naturally receive the same symbolic interpretation. Our Lord speaks here in language as essentially apocalyptic as that of the Revelation of St. John (Rev. viii. 12), and it lies in the very nature of such language that it precludes a literal interpretation. Even the common speech of men describes a

her light, ⁽²⁵⁾ and the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. ⁽²⁶⁾ And then shall they see the Son of man coming in

the clouds with great power and glory. ⁽²⁷⁾ And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost

time of tribulation as one in which "the skies are dark" and "the sun of a nation's glory sets in gloom;" and the language of Isaiah, of St. John, and of our Lord, is but the expansion of that familiar parable. Sun, moon, and stars *may* represent, as many have thought, kingly power, and the spiritual influence of which the Church of Christ is the embodiment, and the illuminating power of those who "shine as lights in the world" (Phil. ii. 15), but even this interpretation is, it may be, over-precise and technical, and the words are better left in their dim and terrible vagueness. We may find at least a partial fulfilment of the "stars falling from heaven" in the "wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever," of Jude, verse 13.

⁽²⁵⁾ **The powers that are in heaven.**—These are, it will be noted, distinguished from the "stars," and may be taken as the apocalyptic expression for the laws or "forces" by which moon and stars are kept in their appointed courses. The phrase is found elsewhere only in the parallel passages in St. Matthew and St. Luke.

⁽²⁶⁾ **Then shall they see the Son of man.**—Note the simpler form, which at once replaces and explains St. Matthew's "the sign of the Son of Man." Can we picture to ourselves what this sign shall be? Is it distinct from the

coming of the Son of Man which here is so closely united with it? Men have given wild conjectural answers to these questions, and have dreamt of the cross as appearing in the sky (as if the vision of Constantine were to be reproduced in the last days), or the lightning flash that shall dazzle all men with its brightness, or of some visible manifestation which none can imagine till it shall come. The vision of Dan. vii. 13, interpreted by St. Mark's report, and by our Lord's words in chap. xiv. 62, supplies, it is believed, the true answer. The sign of the Son of Man is none other than the presence of the Son of Man Himself, coming in the clouds of heaven, in the ineffable glory of His majesty. And here, too, we must remember that we are still in the region of apocalyptic symbols. All such imagery falls short of the ultimate reality, and a "sign in heaven" is something more than a visible appearance in the sky.

⁽²⁷⁾ **Then shall he send his angels.**—Note the absence of the "voice of a trumpet," which is prominent in St. Matthew. The words are memorable as the formal expansion of what had been, as it were, hinted before in the parable of the Tares (Matt. xiii. 41) and the Net (Matt. xiii. 49).

And shall gather together his elect.—The "elect" are the same in idea, though not necessarily

part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven

(28) Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When her branch is yet tender, and

putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near:

(29) so ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know

the same individuals, as those for whom the days were to be shortened in verse 20; and the work of the angels is that of gathering them, wherever they may be scattered, into the one fold. As with so many of the pregnant germs of thought in this chapter, the work of the angels is expanded by the visions of the Apocalypse, when the seer beheld the angels come and seal the hundred and forty-four thousand in their foreheads before the work of judgment should begin (Rev. vii. 2). In each case the elect are those who are living on the earth at the time of the second Advent. In these chapters there is, indeed, no distinct mention of the resurrection of the dead, though they, as well as the living, are implied in the parables of judgment with which the discourse ends in Matt. xxv.

(28) Now learn a parable of the fig tree.—As in so many other instances (comp. John viii. 12; x. 1; xv. 1), we may think of the words as illustrated by a living example. Both time and place make this probable. It was on the Mount of Olives, where then, as now, fig-trees were found as well as olives (chap. xi. 13), and the season was that of early spring, when “the flowers appear on the earth” and the “fig-tree putteth forth her green figs” (Song Sol. ii. 11—13). And what our Lord teaches is that as surely as the fresh green foliage of the fig-

tree is a sign of summer, so shall the signs of which He speaks portend the coming of the Son of Man.

Ye know that summer is near.—Many of the best MSS. give “it is known,” but it may fairly be assumed, from the parallel passages in St. Matthew and St. Luke, that this was the error of an early transcriber of the document which served as a basis for the reports of all the three Evangelists.

(29) **So ye, in like manner.**—The pronoun is emphatic. Ye whom I have chosen, who are therefore among the elect that shall be thus gathered. The words are spoken to the four Apostles as the representatives of the whole body of believers who should be living—first, at the destruction of Jerusalem, and afterwards at the end of the world. Of the four, St. John alone, so far as we know, survived the destruction of Jerusalem, which was an anticipation and foreshadowing of the final Advent.

That it is nigh.—Better, *that He is near*, in accordance with Jas. v. 9. In St. Luke (xxi. 31) we have the explanatory phrase, “the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.” It is not without a special interest that we note the recurrence of our Lord’s very words in the Epistle of him who was known among men as “the brother of the Lord” (Gal. i. 19)

that it is high, *even* at the doors. ⁽³⁰⁾ Verily I say

unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done.

⁽³¹⁾ Heaven and earth shall

pass away : but my words shall not pass away.

⁽³²⁾ But of that day and *that* hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the

⁽³⁰⁾ This generation shall not pass . . .—The natural meaning of the words is, beyond question, that which takes "generation" in the ordinary sense (as in Matt. i. 17, xi. 16, xii. 41, Acts xiii. 36, and elsewhere) for those who are living at any given period. So it was on "this generation" (Matt. xxiii. 36) that the accumulated judgments were to fall. The desire to bring the words into more apparent harmony with history has led some interpreters to take "generation" in the sense of "race" or "people," and so to see in the words a prophecy of the perpetuity of the existence of the Jews as a distinct people till the end of the world. But for this meaning there is not the shadow of authority; nor does it remove the difficulty which it was invented to explain. The words of Matt. xvi. 28 state the same fact in language which does not admit of any such explanation. The true solution of the problem is to be found, it is believed, rather in the manifold character of our Lord's coming than in the ambiguous meanings of the word "generation."

Till all these things be done.—Better, *till all these things come to pass*. The words do not necessarily imply more than the commencement of a process, the first unrolling of the scroll of the coming ages.

⁽³¹⁾ Heaven and earth.—The tone is that of One who speaks with supreme authority, foreseeing, on the one hand, death and seeming failure, but on the other the ultimate victory, not of truth only in the abstract, but of His own word as the truth. The parallelism of the words with those of Ps. cii. 26, Isa. xl. 8, gives them their full significance. The Son of Man claims for His own words the eternity which belongs to the words of Jehovah. (Comp. 1 Pet. i. 24, 25.) The whole history of Christendom witnesses to the fulfilment of the prophetic claim. Amid all its changes and confusions, its errors and its sins, the words of Christ have not passed away, but retain their pre-eminence as the last and fullest revelation of the Father (Heb. i. 1).

⁽³²⁾ No, not the angels which are in heaven.—St. Mark's addition, "neither the Son"—or better, *not even the Son*—is every way remarkable. Assuming, what is well-nigh certain (see *Introduction* to this Gospel), the close connection of that Gospel with St. Peter, it is as if the Apostle who heard the discourse desired, for some special reason, to place on record the *ipsissima verba* of his Master. And that reason may be found in his own teaching. The over-eager expectations of some, and the inevitable reaction of doubt and scorn in others, both rested on their assumption that the

Son, but the Father.
 (33) Take ye heed,^a watch
 and pray : for ye know not
 when the time is. (34) For

^a Matt.
 24. 42.

the Son of man is as a man
 taking a far journey, who
 left his house, and gave
 authority to his servants,

Son of Man had definitely fixed the time of His appearing, and on their consequent forgetfulness of the "long-suffering" which might extend a day into a thousand years (2 Pet. iii. 3—8). It is obviously doing violence to the plain meaning of the words to dilute them into the statement that the Son of Man did not communicate the knowledge which He possessed as the Son of God. If we are perplexed at the mystery of this confession in One in whom we recognise the presence of "the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. i. 19 ; ii. 9), we may find that which may help us at least to wait patiently for the full understanding of the mystery, in St. Paul's teaching, that the eternal Word in becoming flesh, "emptied Himself" (see Phil. ii. 7) of the infinity which belongs to the divine attributes, and took upon Him the limitations necessarily implied in any real assumption of our humanity. Here, as elsewhere, we have to guard against the Apollinarian heresy, which looked on the divine nature of Christ as taking the place of the human soul.

(33) **Take ye heed.**—Note once more the characteristic iteration of the warning of verses 9 and 23. It would almost seem, from the very different conclusions of the discourse in the three Gospels, as if they had been based up to this point on a common document which then stopped and left them to a greater divergency of memory or tradition. The omission of St.

Matthew's reference to the history of Noah is, perhaps, characteristic of St. Mark's Gospel and of St. Luke's, as intended for Gentile readers.

(34) **For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey.**—The italics of the first five words indicate, as usual, that the words are not found in the Greek. Their absence, seeming, as they do, essential to the meaning of the sentence, is singular. A possible explanation is, that we have an imperfect fragmentary report, as from a note taken at the time, of that which appears, in a developed form, as the parable of the Talents in Matt. xxv. 14—30.

And commanded the porter to watch.—This feature is unique in our Lord's parables, and, as such, seems to call for a special interpretation. The "servants" we accept at once as the disciples, and we understand generally what was the authority and the work assigned to them. But who was specifically the "gate-keeper" or "porter" ? The answer appears to be found in the promise of the keys of the kingdom that had been made to St. Peter (Matt. xvi. 19). It was his work to open the door of that kingdom wide, to be ready for his Lord's coming in any of those manifold senses which experience would unfold to him. We may accordingly venture to trace in St. Mark's record, here as elsewhere, the influence of the Apostle. That word "the gate-

and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. ⁽³⁵⁾ Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the

A.D. 33.

morning: ⁽³⁶⁾ lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. ⁽³⁷⁾ And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.

CHAPTER XIV.—

⁽¹⁾ After two days was the

keeper" was, he felt, meant for him, and this he remembered when much that had been recorded by others had faded from his recollection. If we adopt this application of the word here, it throws light on the somewhat difficult reference to the "porter" of the sheep-fold in John x. 3.

⁽³⁵⁾ **The master of the house.**

—Better, *the Lord of the house*. The Greek word is not the same as that commonly rendered the "good-man" or "master" of the house.

At even, or at midnight.—

The four times correspond roughly to the four watches of the night, beginning at 9 P.M., 12, 3 A.M., 6 A.M. The words may be noted as having left, and having been intended to leave, on St. Peter's mind, the impression that the promise of the coming of his Lord was undefined as to times or seasons, which is so prominent in 2 Pet. iii. Each of these seasons named has had its counterpart, we may well believe, embracing many centuries of the world's history. The enumeration of the four divisions of the night is, we may note, peculiar to St. Mark. May we trace here also the influence of St. Peter? Had his experience of the cock-crowing hour impressed the words indelibly on his memory?

⁽³⁶⁾ **Lest, coming suddenly,**

he find you sleeping.—As before we traced a kind of echo of the parable of the Talents, so here we recognise something like a fragmentary reminiscence of that of the Wise and Foolish Virgins. (Comp. Matt. xxv. 13.)

⁽³⁷⁾ **Watch.**—The impression which this command made on the hearts of the Christians is seen in a striking manner in the use of such names as Gregory, Vigilius (= the watcher), and the like. The command was needful in proportion to the gifts and responsibilities of those who heard it. Those four disciples, the sons of Zebedee and Jona, needed it, it may be, most, but it was not for them only, but for the rest of the Twelve, and the Seventy, and all true disciples then and to the end of time.

XIV.

⁽¹⁾ The portion of the Gospel narrative on which we now enter is common, as far as the main facts are concerned, to all the four Gospels, and this gives to every detail in it a special interest. We cannot ignore the fact that it brings with it also some peculiar difficulties. The first three Gospels are in substantial agreement as to the order of the facts and the time at which they occurred. But the fourth, in some respects the fullest

feast of the passover,^a and ^{a Matt. 26. 2.} of unleavened bread: and

the chief priests and the scribes sought how they

and most striking, differs from the Three: (1) in omitting all mention that the Last Supper of our Lord with His disciples was also the Paschal Supper, and at least appearing to imply (John xiii. 1, xviii. 28) that it was before it; (2) in also omitting all record (a) of the institution of the Lord's Supper as the sign of the New Covenant, and (b) of the agony in Gethsemane; (3) in recording much, both as to our Lord's acts and words, which the Three do not record. It will be enough to discuss once for all the problems which thus present themselves, and it is believed that the right place for the discussion will be in the *Excursus* at the close of this volume. Here, therefore, our work will be confined to the text actually before us, with only such passing references to the narrative of St. John as occasion may require. As far as the variations in the first three Gospels are concerned, they are sufficiently explained by the hypothesis that they had a common origin in a history at first delivered orally, and reduced afterwards to writing, with the diversities which are, in the nature of the case, incident to such a process.

After two days was the feast of the passover.—Better, *was the passover, and the feast of unleavened bread*. The latter designation is common to St. Mark and St. Luke, as an explanation intended for Gentile readers. The same fact accounts, perhaps, for the omission by both of the name of Caiaphas as the chief mover in the scheme. Assuming (as the

facts of the case lead us to assume, but see *Excursus*) the Last Supper to have coincided with the actual Paschal Feast, the point of time at which the words were spoken would either be some time on what we should call the Tuesday evening of the Passion week, or, following the Jewish mode of speech which found three days in the interval between our Lord's entombment and resurrection, on the morning or afternoon of Wednesday.

The chief priests and the scribes.—We learn from John xi. 49, 50, that the plan, as far as Caiaphas was concerned, had been formed before, immediately after the raising of Lazarus. What had happened since—the kingly entry, the expulsion of the money-changers, the way in which our Lord had baffled their attempt to entrap Him in His speech—would all work as so many motives to immediate action. The meeting now assembled may have been either a formal session of the Sanhedrin, or an informal conference of its chief members prior to the regular meeting. The former seems, on the whole, the more probable. The “chief priests” were the heads of the twenty-four courses; the elders of the people were the representatives—how elected or selected we do not know—of the citizens of Jerusalem. St. Mark and St. Luke name “scribes” instead of “elders.” These two bodies may have been identical, but more probably the scribes of the Council represented the whole class of interpreters of the Law, who bore that name in

might take him by craft, and put *him* to death.

(2) But they said, Not on

the feast *day*, lest there be an uproar of the people.

(3) And being in Bethany

its wider sense. At the head of the whole movement was the high priest Caiaphas. The name was a distinctive one added to his proper name of Joseph. Of his previous history we know that he had married the daughter of Annas, who had filled the office of high priest before him (John xviii. 13), and who still occupied, possibly as *Nasi* or President, an influential position in the Council and retained his titular pre-eminence. (See Luke iii. 2.) He had been high priest from the commencement of our Lord's ministry, and had, therefore, watched His ministry in Jerusalem with a jealous fear. We may probably trace his influence in the mission of the scribes from Jerusalem, whom we have seen as opponents of that ministry in Galilee (Mark iii. 22; Luke v. 17). The meeting in his house (Matt. xxvi. 3) implied a coalition of parties commonly opposed, for Caiaphas and his personal adherents were Sadducees (Acts v. 17), and as such, courted the favour of their Roman rulers (John xi. 48), while the scribes were, for the most part, Pharisees, and assertors of national independence.

How they might take him by craft.—The plan implied in these words and in those that follow ("not on the feast day") would seem to have been hastened in its accomplishment by the unexpected treachery of Judas. They had intended to wait till the feast was over, as Agrippa did in the case of Peter (Acts xii. 4); but the

temptation thus offered was too great to be resisted, and they accordingly stepped out of the limits which their caution had suggested, and were content to run the risk even of an "uproar among the people" within the twenty-four hours of the Paschal Feast.

(3) **And being in Bethany.**—The narrative is given out of its proper order on account of its connection (as indicated in St. John's record) with the act of the Traitor. St. John fixes it (xii. 1) at six days before the Passover, *i.e.*, on the evening that preceded the entry into Jerusalem. It was, therefore, a feast such as Jews were wont to hold at the close of the Sabbath.

In the house of Simon the leper.—Of the man so described we know nothing beyond the fact thus mentioned. It is not likely, had he been a leper at the time, that men would have gathered to a feast at his house, and it is natural to infer that our Lord had healed him, but that the name still adhered to him to distinguish him from other Simons. We learn from St. John (xii. 2) that Lazarus was there, and that Martha, true to her character, was busy "serving." The Twelve were also there, and probably many others. The incident that follows is narrated by all the Evangelists except St. Luke, who may either not have heard it from his informants, or, if he had heard it, may have passed it over as having already recorded a fact of like character (Luke vii. 37—40).

in the house of Simon the leper,^a as he sat at meat, there came a woman having

^a Matt.
21. 6.
¹ Or,
pure
nard,
or,
liquid
nard.

an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard¹ very precious; and she brake

There came a woman.—We learn from St. John (xii. 3) that this was Mary the sister of Lazarus. It is hardly conceivable (unless we conjecture that she came in veiled, and that St. John alone knew her) that the writers of the first two Gospels, or those from whom they derived their knowledge, could have been ignorant who she was, and we can only see in their suppression of the name an example of the singular reticence which sealed their lips as to every member of the family at Bethany. A prevalent tradition or conjecture in the Western Church has identified Mary Magdalene with the sister of Lazarus, and both with the woman that was a sinner, of Luke vii., and, on this assumption what we now read was a repetition of an offering of love that had been made before. Of this, however, either wholly, or in part, there is not the shadow of a proof (see Luke vii. 37, 38, viii. 1). It may well have been, on the other hand, that the household of Bethany had heard of that act, and that this suggested the way in which love and gratitude now manifested themselves. Read in the light of St. John's Gospel we have to remember at every stage in the narrative, that that gratitude had been called forth by the raising of Lazarus from the grave.

An alabaster box of ointment of spikenard.—The box or flask (there is no word answer-

ing to "box" in the Greek) was probably a vase of the material described as alabaster (according to one etymology, however, that word described originally the shape of the vase, as made without handles, and was subsequently extended to the material of which such vases were commonly made), with the lid cemented down, so as not to admit of extraction like a cork or stopper. St. John (xii. 3) describes the quantity as a pound (*litra*—about twelve ounces); and both St. John and St. Mark add that it was "of spikenard." The word answering to the first syllable, however (*pistike*), is found only in those two passages (Mark xiv. 3, John xii. 3), and it is open to question whether it bears this sense, or was a technical term current at the time, as applied to such articles, and meaning "pure, genuine, unadulterated." The "nard" so described (the word, like the thing, was probably Persian or Indian in its origin) is identified by botanists with the *Nardostachys jatamansi*, the *sumbul* of India, but was probably applied by Greeks and Romans to other perfumes. The value of the ointment is roughly estimated afterwards at three hundred *denarii* (John xii. 5). Such preparations, like genuine *atar* of roses in the modern East, consisting as they did mainly in the essential oils of carefully cultivated flowers, often fetched an almost fabulous price. The fact that Mary had such an unguent by

the box, and poured it on his head. ⁽⁴⁾ And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this

¹ See
Matt.
18. 28.

waste of the ointment made? ⁽⁵⁾ for it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence,¹ and have been given to the

her indicates that the household of Bethany belonged to the comparatively wealthy class, and so agrees with the general impression left by the record of John xi. It is a probable conjecture that a like costly unguent had been used in embalming the body of the brother who had so recently been raised from the dead, and that this gave a special point to our Lord's comment on the act. The special feature in St. Mark's report is that she broke or crushed the vessel in order to pour out the ointment; in St. John's (xii. 3) that she anointed His feet, as well as His head, and wiped them with her hair.

⁽⁴⁾ **There were some that had indignation.**—There is a singular narrowing of the limits in the three narratives. St. Matthew (xxvi. 8) states that "*the disciples*" had indignation. St. Mark reports that "*some* had indignation;" St. John (xii. 4), as knowing who had whispered the first word of blame, fixes the uncharitable judgment on "Judas Iscariot, Simon's son." The narrow, covetous soul of the Traitor could see nothing in the lavish gift but a "waste" (literally *perdition*) that was matter for reproach. There is something almost terribly suggestive in the fact that our Lord repeats the self-same word when he describes Judas as a "son of perdition" (John xvii. 12). He had wasted that which was more

precious than the ointment of spikenard, even the gift of eternal life which had once been within his reach. He wondered that his Master should accept such an offering. His indignation, partly real, partly affected, was perhaps honestly shared by some of his fellow-disciples, probably by those of the third group, with whom he came most into contact, and of whom we may well think as having a less glowing love, and narrower sympathies, than the others.

⁽⁵⁾ **For more than three hundred pence.**—The specific mention of the sum, not given by St. Matthew, is one of the few points common to St. Mark and St. John (xii. 5). It might have been sold for three hundred *denarii*, a labourer's wages for nearly a whole year (Matt. xx. 2), enough to feed a multitude of more than 7,500 men (John vi. 7). St. John adds the damning fact that the pretended zeal for the poor was but a cloak for the irritation of disappointed greed. "He was a thief, and bare the bag"—he was, *i.e.*, the treasurer or bursar of the travelling company, received the offerings of the wealthier sympathisers, and disbursed them either on their necessary expenditure or in alms to the poor (see John xii. 6 and xiii. 29). This business power, with the work for which it fitted him, was the "one talent" given to him "according to his ability," and

poor. And they murmured against her. ⁽⁶⁾ And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath

wrought a good work on me. ⁽⁷⁾ For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may

in dealing with it he proved fraudulent and faithless.

⁽⁶⁾ **Why trouble ye her?**—The Greek is more emphatic, “Why are ye giving trouble?” St. Mark uses a word in verse 5 to describe their conduct which explains what follows. “They murmured against her,” or better, *They were bitterly reproaching her*. One after another of the murmurers uttered his bitter remonstrances. The word is the same as the “straitly charged” of Matt. ix. 30, Mark i. 43; as the “groaning” of John xi. 33, 38.

She hath wrought a good work on me.—The Greek adjective implies something more than “good”—a *noble*, an *honourable* work. The Lord Jesus, in His sympathy with all human affections, recognises the love that is lavish in its personal devotion as noble and excellent in itself. After His departure, as the teaching of Matt. xxv. 40 reminds us, the poor are His chosen representatives, and our offerings to Him are best made through them. How far the words sanction, as they are often urged as sanctioning, a lavish expenditure on the æsthetic element of worship, church architecture, ornamentation, and the like, is a question which naturally presents itself, and to which it may be well to find an answer. And the leading lines of thought are—(1) that if the motive be love, and not ostentation, He will recognise it, even if it is, as from the stand-point of a wise eco-

nomy, misdirected; (2) that so far as ostentation, or the sense of self-righteous merit, or the wish to gratify our own taste and sense of beauty, enters into it, it is vitiated from the beginning; (3) that the wants of the poor have a claim which ranks higher than that gratification. On the other hand, we must remember—(1) that the poor have spiritual wants as well as physical; (2) that all well-directed church-building and decoration minister to those wants, and, even in their accessories of form and colour, give to the poor a joy which is in itself an element of culture, and may minister to their religious life by making worship a delight. It is a work of charity thus to lighten up lives that are otherwise dull and dreary, and the true law to guide our conscience in such matters is to place our noblest churches in the districts where the people are the poorest.

⁽⁷⁾ **Ye have the poor with you always.**—Our Lord dealt with the objection of the murmurers on their own ground, as if it were genuine, and does not openly rebuke the dishonesty of the chief objector. But look and tone, and the solemn pathos of the words, “Me ye have not always,” must have made the Traitor feel that he was in the presence of One who read the secrets of his heart.

Whensoever ye will ye may do them good.—Peculiar to St. Mark; the other words being given by him in common with St.

do them good : but me ye have not always. ⁽⁸⁾ She hath done what she could : she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying. ⁽⁹⁾ Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this

^a Matt.
26. 14

gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, *this* also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.

⁽¹⁰⁾ And Judas Iscariot, ^a one of the twelve, went

Matthew and St. John. For some who heard them those words would present simply a contrast between the permanent work of those who "have the poor always with them" and the preciousness of the few days that remained for converse with their Lord. To the traitor they would seem fraught with the profoundest irony and reproach.

⁽⁸⁾ **To anoint my body to the burying.**—The words must have fallen with a strange sadness upon the ears of the disciples and the other guests. They were expecting that "the kingdom of God should immediately appear" (Luke xix. 11), and were looking forward to the dawn of the next day as the hour of its victory and triumph. The enthusiasm of the moment made them deaf to the real import of what they heard, and their Master, alone of all that company, knew that the fragrance of that perfume would not have died away when His body should be laid in the sepulchre. What the sister of Lazarus had before done for her brother, she was now doing for the Master at whose feet she had sat listening in rapt devotion. (Luke x. 39.)

⁽⁹⁾ **Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached.**—Many of the better MSS. have simply "*the Gospel.*" The prediction tended, of course assuming the extension

of the gospel, to bring 'about its own fulfilment, but the prevision at such a moment of that universal extension may well take its place among the proofs of a foreknowledge not less than divine. Others saw victory only, and that immediate; He saw condemnation and shame and death, yet not these only, but through them a victory and dominion over the souls of men beyond their wildest dreams.

⁽¹⁰⁾ **And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve.**—The narrative of St. John leads us, as has been said, to connect the act of treachery with the fact just recorded. There was the shame, and therefore the anger, of detected guilt; there was the greed of gain that had been robbed of its expected spoil and thirsted for compensation. The purpose that had been formed by the priests and scribes after the resurrection of Lazarus (John xi. 47) may well have become known, and have suggested the hope of a reward. All these feelings were gathering strength through the three days that followed. Possibly there mingled with them a sense of disappointment that the kingly entry into Jerusalem was not followed up by immediate victory, and some have even thought that his chief purpose in his treacherous compact was to force his Master

unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them.

⁽¹¹⁾ And when they heard *it*, they were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought

^a Matt.
26. 17.
¹ Or, *re-*
crificed.

how he might conveniently betray him.

⁽¹²⁾ And the first day of unleavened bread,^a when they killed¹ the passover, his disciples said unto him,

into a position which would compel Him to claim the throne of David. St. Luke's words, that "Satan entered into Judas" (Luke xxii. 3), are remarkable (1) as implying the personal influence of the Tempter; (2) as indicating the fiendish tenacity with which he followed out his purpose; (3) as coinciding with what St. John (xiii. 27) relates at a later stage of his guilt. Nor can we forget that, even at an earlier period of his discipleship, our Lord had used words which spoke of the "devil-nature" that was already working in His soul (John vi. 70).

⁽¹¹⁾ They were glad, and promised to give him money.—It may be noted (1) that the mention of the priests being "glad" is in common with St. Luke (xxii. 5), and (2) that St. Mark does not name the specific sum which was promised as the price of blood. The reward (Matt. xxvi. 15) was relatively a small one, apparently about the market-price of a common slave (Zech. xi. 12; Hos. iii. 2); but the chief priests (Caiaphas and his fellows) saw through the sordid baseness of the man, and, as if scorning both his Master and himself, fixed their reward accordingly.

⁽¹²⁾ And the first day of unleavened bread.—St. Mark and St. Luke (xxii. 7), as writing for Gentile readers, give the explanation that it was then that

the Passover was to be slain. The precision with which all the first three Gospels emphasise the fact leaves no room for doubt that they looked on the Last Supper as the celebration of the actual Paschal Feast. St. John's narrative, as has been said, leaves, *primâ facie*, a different impression.

Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover?—Our Lord had passed each night since his entry at Bethany (Matt. xxi. 17; Luke xxi. 37) probably in the house of Lazarus or Simon the leper, or in the garden of Gethsemane (John xviii. 1), but the Paschal lamb was to be slain and eaten in Jerusalem, and therefore special preparations were needed. Once before, and probably once only (John ii. 13), had the disciples kept that feast with Him in the Holy City. Were they expecting, as they asked the question, that this feast was to be the chosen, and, as it might well seem, appropriate time for the victorious manifestation of the Kingdom, for another deliverance even more wonderful than that of the first Passover from the house of bondage? Was this the reason of the form in which, in St. Mark's report, they put the question, "that thou mayest eat the Passover." In Luke xxii. 7, however, we find "that we may eat."

Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover? ⁽¹³⁾ And he sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him. ⁽¹⁴⁾ And where-

soever he shall go in, say ye to the goodman of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the pass-over with my disciples? ⁽¹⁵⁾ And he will shew you a large upper room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us. ⁽¹⁶⁾ And

⁽¹³⁾ And he sendeth forth two of his disciples.—The number is given by St. Mark; the names, Peter and John, by St. Luke only (xxii. 7), and we may, perhaps, trace a special purpose in the selection. A time was at hand in which each would need the love and sympathy of the other, and their Lord sought to unite those whom a selfish love of pre-eminence was threatening to divide (chap. x. 35—45). St. Mark and St. Luke relate the sign that was given them. They were to meet a man “bearing a pitcher of water” and follow him, and were to see in the house into which he entered that in which they were to make their preparations. The master of the house was probably a disciple (possibly Nicodemus, or Joseph of Arimathea, or some one connected with them) but, secretly, like many others, “for fear of the Jews” (John xii. 42), and this may explain the suppression of his name. In St. Matthew (xxvi. 18) he is significantly described as “such a man.” He was, at any rate, one who would acknowledge the authority of the Master—the Rabbi (the very word which Nicodemus had used of Jesus in John iii. 2) ‘n whose

name the disciples spoke. Here and in St. Luke’s report (xxii. 12) our Lord describes the large upper room furnished which the disciples would find on entering. The signal may have been agreed upon before, or may have been the result of a supernatural prescience. Scripture is silent, and either supposition is legitimate.

⁽¹⁴⁾ The goodman of the house.—Better, *the master*. The better MSS. give the reading, “Where is *my* guest-chamber,” a form which implies discipleship on the part of the owner of the house, or some previous arrangement, even more than that given by St. Matthew. The word translated “guest-chamber” is the same as that which appears in Luke ii. 7 as “inn.” It was, in fact, the generic term for a hired lodging—the *khan*, or *caravanserai*, of the East.

⁽¹⁵⁾ Furnished and prepared. The first word implied that it was not a bare, empty chamber, but set out with cushions or *divans*, on which the guests could recline; the second, that it was specially arranged for the Paschal Supper of that evening. The “upper room” immediately below the roof was that commonly used for the reception of guests.

⁽¹⁶⁾ They made ready the

his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover. ⁽¹⁷⁾ And

^a Matt.
26. 21.

in the evening he cometh with the twelve. ⁽¹⁸⁾ And as they sat and did eat,^a Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, One of you

passover.—It may be well to bring together the facts which these few words imply. The two disciples, after seeing that the room was “furnished,” the tables arranged, probably in the form of a Roman *triclinium*, and the benches covered with cushions, would have to purchase the lamb, the unleavened bread, and the bitter herbs, together with the wine and the conserve of sweet fruits which later practice had added to the older ritual. The Paschal victim would have to be slain in the courts of the Temple by one of the officiating priests, or Levites (2 Chron. xxx. 17). The lamb so slain would then be roasted, the bitter herbs prepared, and the table set out, and then, as sunset drew near, all would be ready for the Master and His disciples, who formed, on this occasion, the household which were to partake of the Paschal Supper. (Exod. xii. 3—6.) The two disciples would probably wait for their Master’s arrival with the other ten, superintending the preparations.

⁽¹⁷⁾ **He cometh with the Twelve.**—Filling up St. Mark’s narrative from the other Gospels, we may call to mind here the words of strong emotion with which the feast was opened (Luke xxii. 15), the dispute among the disciples, probably connected with the places which they were to occupy at the table (Luke xxii. 24), and our Lord’s practical reproof of

that dispute in washing His disciples’ feet (John xiii. 1—11). Picturing the scene to ourselves, we may think of our Lord as reclining—not sitting—in the centre of the middle table, St. John next to Him, and leaning on His bosom (John xiii. 23), St. Peter probably on the other side, and the others sitting in an order corresponding, more or less closely, with the three-fold division of the Twelve into groups of four. (See Note on chap. iii. 16—19.) Upon the washing of the feet followed the teaching of John xiii. 12—20, and then came the “blessing” or “thanksgiving” which opened the meal. This went on in silence, while the countenance of the Master betrayed the deep emotion which troubled his spirit (John xiii. 21), and then the silence was broken by the awful words which are recorded in the next verse.

⁽¹⁸⁾ **As they sat.**—Better, *as they reclined*.

One of you which eateth with me shall betray me.—The words would seem to have been intentionally vague, as if to rouse some of those who heard them to self-questioning. They had not, it is true, shared in the very guilt of the Traitor, but they had yielded to tendencies which they had in common with him, and which were dragging them down to his level. They had joined him in his murmuring (verse 4), they had been quarrelling, and were about to renew their quarrel, about prece-

which eateth with me shall betray me. ⁽¹⁹⁾ And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him one by one, *Is it I?* and another said, *Is it I?* ⁽²⁰⁾ And he answered and said unto

them, *It is one of the twelve, that dippeth with me in the dish.* ⁽²¹⁾ The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is

dence (Mark ix. 34, Luke xxii. 24). They shared, it may be, in his earthly thoughts of the kingdom which the Christ was to found. It was well that the abyss should be laid bare before their eyes, and that each should ask himself whether he were indeed on the point of falling into it.

⁽¹⁹⁾ They began to be sorrowful.—St. John (xiii. 22) describes their perplexed and questioning glances at each other, the whisper of Peter to John, the answer of our Lord to the beloved disciple, announcing the sign by which the Traitor was to be indicated. All this passed apparently as a by-play, unheard or unheeded by the other disciples. It was followed by the hands of the Master and the Traitor meeting in the dish (probably that which contained the conserve of fruit above referred to); and dipping a piece of the unleavened bread in the syrup, the One gave it to the other. The signal was, of course, understood by Peter and John, but probably not by the others.

⁽²⁰⁾ That dippeth with me in the dish.—It seems probable from what follows that these words also were spoken to a few only of the disciples—say to the four who were nearest to their Master. We can scarcely think of Judas as asking the ques-

tion of verse 19, if he had heard the words and knew that they pointed to him as the traitor. The word for "dish" is a diminutive form of "cup," and indicates what we should call one of the "side dishes," probably that containing the conserve mentioned in the Note on verse 16.

⁽²¹⁾ The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written.—The words must have recalled those of chap. ix. 12, and were, we may believe, meant to recall them. It was appointed that the Christ should suffer, but that appointment did not make men less free agents, nor diminish the guilt of treachery or injustice. So, in like manner, as if taught by his Master, St. Peter speaks of the guilt of Judas in Acts i. 16—18, and of that of the priests and scribes in Acts iv. 27, 28.

Good were it for that man.—Awful as the words were, they have their bright as well as their dark side. According to the estimate which men commonly form, the words are true of all except those who depart this life in the full fear and faith of God. In our Lord's application of them to the case of the Traitor in its exceptional enormity, there is suggested the thought that for others, whose guilt was not like his, existence even in the penal suffering which their sins

betrayed ! good were it for
that man if he had never
been born.

^a Matt.
26. 26.

(22) And as they did eat,^a
Jesus took bread, and
blessed, and brake it, and

have brought on them may be better than never to have been at all. The narrative requires to be filled up from the other Gospels. St. Matthew (xxvi. 25) records the fact that Judas himself ventured to ask the question, "Lord, is it I?" The words appear to have been spoken in the spirit of reckless defiance, which St. John indicates by saying that "after the sop Satan entered into him" (John xiii. 27). Did his Master (he calls Him by the wonted title of honour, Rabbi) indeed know his guilt? It would appear from St. John's narrative (xiii. 29) that the dread answer, "Thou hast said," was not heard by all. All that they did hear was the command, "What thou doest, do quickly;" and some at least, probably the rest who were not in the secret of the signal, thought that that command referred to some matter connected with his customary work as the bursar of the company. He was to buy what was needed for the feast (i.e., probably, the customary solemn meal, or *Chagigah*, of the day that followed on the Paschal Supper), or to give alms to the poor. He, however, understood the meaning of the words, and straightway went out (John xiii. 27—30). The fact that his treachery was known made it more than ever necessary that he should act it out at once. On the views which some have taken (see Note on verse 10) that his purpose was to force his Lord to declare Himself the king of Israel, he may possibly even have taken the words as an

implied approval of his scheme. It follows, from this view of the sequence of events, that though he had eaten bread with his Master, he did not partake of the bread and the cup that were to be the signs of the New Covenant. At this stage St. John inserts the words as to the new commandment, "that ye should love another," which was embodied in that act of fellowship.

(23) **As they did eat.**—Again we must represent to ourselves an interval of silence, broken by the acts or words that followed. The usual "grace" or blessing had been spoken at the beginning of the feast. Now, taking one of the cakes of unleavened bread, He again utters a solemn formula of blessing, and gives it to them with the words, "Take, eat (the latter word, however, is omitted in some MSS.) this is my body;" or, as in St. Luke's fuller report (xxii. 19; comp. also 1 Cor. xi. 24), "This is My body that is given for you" (literally, *that is in the act of being given*); "do this in remembrance of Me" (better, *as a memorial of Me*). It would be an endless and profitless task to enter into the labyrinth of subtle speculations to which these words have given rise. Did the bread which He thus gave them contain at that moment the substance of His body, taking the place of its own substance or united with it? Was the identification of the two an objective or a subjective fact? In what way is He present when those words are repeated and the faithful

gave to them, and said, |
Take, eat: this is my body. |

(23) And he took the cup, |
and when he had given |

receive the "sacrament of the body and blood of Christ?" Questions such as these, theories of Transubstantiation, Consubstantiation, and the like, are, we may venture to say, foreign to the mind of Christ, and outside the range of any true interpretation. As pointing to the true path through that labyrinth, it will be enough to remember (1) that our Lord's later teaching had accustomed the disciples to language of like figurative boldness. He was "the door of the sheepfold" (John x. 7), the "stone which the builders rejected" (chap. xii. 10). What they would understand at the time and afterwards was, that He spoke of His body as being as truly given *for* them as that bread which He had broken was given *to* them. (2) That the words could scarcely fail to recall what had once seemed a "hard saying which they could not hear" (John vi. 60). They had been told that they could only enter into eternal life by eating His flesh and drinking His blood—*i.e.*, by sharing His life, and the spirit of sacrifice which led Him to offer it up for the life of the world. Now they were taught that what had appeared impossible was to become possible, through the outward symbol of the bread thus broken. They were to "do this" (Luke xxii. 19) as a memorial of Him, and so to keep fresh in their remembrance that sacrifice which He had offered. To see in these words, as some have seen, the command, "Offer this as a sacrifice," is to do violence to their natural meaning by reading into them the after-thoughts of theology. But, on the

other hand, the word rendered "remembrance" or "memorial" was one not without a sacrificial aspect of its own. Every "sacrifice" was a "remembrance" of man's sins (Heb. x. 3). Every Paschal Feast was a "memorial" of the first great Passover (Ex. xii. 9; Num. x. 10). So every act such as he now commanded would be a "memorial" at once of the sins which made a sacrifice necessary, and of the one great sacrifice which He had offered. (3) It seems something like a descent to a lower region of thought, but it ought to be noted that the time at which the memorial was thus instituted, "while they were eating," and obviously in the middle of the feast or near its close, is not without its significance in the controversies which have been raised as to fasting or non-fasting communion. Rules on such a subject, so far as any Church adopts them, or any individual Christian finds them expedient, may have their authority and their value, but the facts of the original institution witness that they rest on no divine authority, and that a Church acts wisely when it leaves the question to every individual Christian to decide as he is "fully persuaded in his own mind" (Rom. xiv. 5). The word "eat," it may be noted, is wanting in many of the best MSS.

(23) **He took the cup, and when he had given thanks.**—St. Mark agrees with St. Matthew in using the word "blessing" of the bread, and "giving thanks" of the cup. Both words answer to the general idea of what we call a

thanks, he gave it to them: |
and they all drank of it. |

(24) And he said unto |
them, This is my blood |

"grace" (*gratia*), but the former was more appropriate to the beginning, the latter to the end, of a meal. St. Luke uses the latter word of the bread, and implies by the word "likewise" that the form was repeated with the cup. The better MSS. omit the article; thus making it, "*a cup*." In the later ritual of the Passover, the cup of wine (or rather, of wine mingled with water) was passed round three times in the course of the supper. One such cup had been passed round early in the evening (Luke xxii. 17); now another becomes, under a solemn consecration, the symbol of a diviner truth than had yet been revealed to the listening and wondering disciples.

(24) **This is my blood of the new testament.**—Better, *this is My blood of the Covenant*; the best MSS. omitting the word "new" both here and in St. Matthew (xxvi. 28). It was probably introduced into the later MSS. to bring the text into harmony with St. Luke's report. Assuming the word "new" to have been actually spoken by our Lord, we can understand its being passed over by some reporters or transcribers whose attention had not been specially called to the great prophecy of Jer. xxxi. 31—34. That prophecy was, however, certain to have a prominent place in the minds of those who had come into contact, as St. Luke must have done, with the line of thought indicated in the Epistle to the Hebrews (chaps. viii., ix.), and therefore we cannot wonder that we find it in the report of the words given by

him (Luke xxii. 20) and by St. Paul (1 Cor. xi. 25). If we were to accept the other alternative, it would still be true that the covenant of which our Lord spoke was *ipso facto* "new," and was therefore that of which Jeremiah had spoken, and that the insertion of the word (looking to the general freedom of the Gospels in reporting our Lord's discourses) was a legitimate way of emphasising that fact.

Dealing with the words, we note (1) that the word "covenant" is everywhere (with, possibly, the one exception of Heb. ix. 16), the best equivalent for the Greek word. The popular use of the "New Testament" for the collected writings of the apostolic age, makes its employment here and in the parallel passages singularly infelicitous. (2) That the "blood of the covenant" is obviously a reference to the history of Ex. xxiv. 4—8. The blood which the Son of Man was about to shed was to be to the true Israel of God what the blood which Moses had sprinkled on the people had been to the outward Israel. It was the true "blood of sprinkling" (Heb. xii. 24), and Jesus was thus the "Mediator" of the New Covenant as Moses had been of the Old (Gal. iii. 19). (3) That so far as this was, in fact or words, the sign of a new covenant, it turned the thoughts of the disciples to that of which Jeremiah had spoken. The essence of that covenant was to be the inward working of the divine law, which had before been brought before the conscience as an external standard of duty—"I will put My law in their inward parts." Jer.

of the new testament, | which is shed for many.

xxx. 33)—a truer knowledge of God, and through that knowledge the forgiveness of iniquity; and all this, they were told, was to be brought about through the sacrifice of the death of Christ. (4) In the words reported by St. Luke (xxii. 29), "I appoint unto you"—the verb being that from which "covenant" (*διαθήκη*) is derived—we have something like an allusive reference to the "testament" aspect of the word, which, as in Heb. ix. 16, was closely connected with the other, both meanings being included in the general idea of a "deed of appointment."

Which is shed for many.—The participle is, as in the "given" (*being given*) of Luke xxii. 19, in the present tense—*which is being shed*—the immediate future being presented to them as if it were actually passing before their eyes. As in Matt. xx. 28, Mark ix. 45, our Lord uses the indefinite "for many," as equivalent to the universal "for all." St. Paul's language in 1 Tim. ii. 6 shows, beyond the shadow of a doubt, how the words "for many" had been interpreted. (Comp. also Rom. v. 15—18.) St. Matthew adds the important words "for the remission of sins." This had been from the outset the substance of the gospel which our Lord had preached, both to the people collectively (Luke iv. 16—19) and to individual souls (Matt. ix. 2; Luke vii. 48). What was new in the words now was this connection with the shedding of His blood as that which was instrumental in obtaining the forgiveness. Returning, with the thoughts thus brought together, to the command

of Matt. xxvi. 27, "Drink ye all of it," we may see, as before in the case of the bread, an allusive reference to the mysterious words of John vi. 53, 54. In the contrast between the "sprinkling" of Ex. xxiv. 6 and the "drinking" here enjoined, we may legitimately see a symbol, not only of the participation of believers in the life of Christ, as represented by the blood, but also of the difference between the outward character of the Old Covenant and the inward nature of the New. It is, perhaps, not altogether outside the range of associations thus suggested to note, that to drink together of a cup filled with human blood had come to be regarded as a kind of sacrament of closest and perpetual union, and as such was chosen by evil-doers—as in the case of Catiline (Sallust, *Catil.* c. 22)—to bind their partners in guilt more closely to themselves. The cup which our Lord gave His disciples, though filled with wine, was to be to them the pledge of a union in holiness as deep and true as that which bound others in a league of evil.

We cannot pass, however, from these words without dwelling for a moment on their evidential aspect. For eighteen centuries—without, so far as we can trace, any interruption, even for a single week—the Christian Church, in all its manifold divisions, under every conceivable variety of form and ritual, has had its meetings to break bread and to drink wine, not as a social feast (from a very early date, if not from the beginning, the limited quantity of bread and wine must have excluded that idea,

(25) Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it

¹ Or.
psalm.

new in the kingdom of God.

(26) And when they had sung an hymn,¹ they went

even when, as at first, it was connected with the *agapæ*, or "love-feasts") but as a commemorative act. It has referred its observance to the command thus recorded, and no other explanation has ever been suggested. But this being granted, we have in our Lord's words, at the very time when he had spoken of the guilt of the Traitor and His own approaching death, something like the proof of a divine prescience. He spake as though He knew that His true work was beginning and not ending; that He was giving a commandment that would last to the end of time; that He had obtained a greater honour than Moses, and was the Mediator of a better covenant (Heb. iii. 3; viii. 6). At the lowest estimate the practice of the Church attests the fact that there was such a Last Supper as that here recorded.

(25) **I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine.**—Literally, *product of the vine*. It would be better, perhaps, to translate, *I shall not drink*, as implying the acceptance of what had been ordained by God rather than an act of volition. The words carry us into a region of mystic symbolism. Never afterwards while he tarried upon earth—not even in the manifestations of His presence, in which He ate and drank with them after He rose from the dead (Luke xxiv. 42; John xxi. 15)—was He to taste of the wine-cup with His disciples. But in the kingdom of God, completed and perfected, He would be with

them once again, and then Master and disciples would be alike sharers in that joy in the Holy Ghost, of which wine—new wine—was the appropriate symbol. The language of Prov. ix. 2 and Isa. xxv. 6, helps us to enter into the meaning of the words. Even the mocking taunt of the multitude on the day of Pentecost, "These men are full of new wine" (Acts ii. 13), may have recalled the mysterious promise to the minds of the Apostles, and enabled them to comprehend that it was through the gift of the Spirit that they were entering, in part at least, even then, into the joy of their Lord. (Comp. also Eph. v. 18; Zech. ix. 17.)

(26) **And when they had sung an hymn.**—This close of the supper would seem to coincide (but the work of the harmonist is not an easy one here) with the "Rise, let us go hence" of John xiv. 31, and, if so, we have to think of the conversation in John xiii. 30—38, xiv., including the warning to Peter, the answers to Thomas and Philip, the promise of the Comforter, as either coming between the departure of Judas and the institution of the Lord's Supper, or else between that institution and the concluding hymn. This was probably the received Paschal series of Psalms, known as the Great *Hallel* (cxv. to cxviii., inclusive), and the word implies a chant or musical recitative. Psalms cxiii., cxiv., were sung commonly during the meal. The Greek word may

out into the mount of ^{a Matt. 26. 31.} Olives. ⁽²⁷⁾ And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offered because of me this

night:^a for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. ⁽²⁸⁾ But after

mean "when they had sung their hymn," as of something known and definite. We must assume that our Lord led the chant; and if so, some of the words—as, *e.g.*, Ps. cxvi. 3—8, 15; cxviii. 17, 18, 22—must, as interpreted by what followed, have been full of pregnant meanings. The last verse, "The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner," had already been quoted by our Lord in the hearing of the disciples. (See Note on chap. xii. 10.)

They went out into the mount of Olives.—We must think of the breaking up of the Paschal company; of the fear and forebodings which pressed upon the minds of all, as they left the chamber, and made their way, under the cold moonlight, through the streets of Jerusalem, down to the valley of the Kidron and up the western slope of Olivet. St. Luke records that His disciples followed Him, some near, some, it may be, afar off. The discourses reported in John xv., xvi., xvii., which must be assigned to this period in the evening, seem to imply a halt from time to time, during which the Master poured forth His heart to His disciples, or uttered intercessions for them. St. John, who had "lain in His bosom" at the supper, would naturally be nearest to Him now, and this may, in part at least, taken together with his greater power of entering into his Lord's teaching, explain how it was that so full a report of all that

was thus spoken appears in his Gospel, and in that only.

⁽²⁷⁾ All ye shall be offered because of me this night.—We may think of the words as spoken at some early stage of that evening walk. It corresponds in substance with John xvi. 32, but seems to have been uttered more abruptly. The latter words are wanting in many of the best MSS., and may have been added from Matt. xxvi. 31.

I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.—The citation of this prophecy, from Zech. xiii. 7, is every way suggestive, as showing that our Lord's thoughts had dwelt, and that He led the disciples to dwell, on that chapter as applicable to Himself. To one who dealt with prophecy as the Evangelists dealt with it, much in that chapter that is perplexing to the historical critic would be full of divinest meaning. It told of a "fountain open for sin and for uncleanness" (Zech. xiii. 1); of One with "wounds" in His hands, who was "wounded in the house of His friends" (Zech. xiii. 6); of the Shepherd to whom Jehovah spake as to His "fellow" (Zech. xiii. 7). The disciples could not fail to connect the words now cited with what they had heard from their Lord in John x. 11.

⁽²⁸⁾ After that I am risen.—Our Lord referred to these His words afterwards (chap. xvi. 7; Matt. xxviii. 16), but they appear to have fallen at the time unheeded

that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee.

(29) But Peter said unto him,^a Although all shall be offended, yet *will* not I.

(30) And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this day, *even* in this night, before the

^a Matt.
20. 33.

cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. (31) But

he spake the more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all.

(32) And they came to a place which was named

on the ears of the disciples, and to have been rapidly forgotten. No expectation of a resurrection is traceable in their after conduct.

(29) **Although all shall be offended.**—St. Matthew and St. Mark place the boast of Peter, and the prediction of his denial, after the disciples had left the guest-chamber; St. Luke (xxii. 23) and St. John (xiii. 37) agree in placing it before. It is barely possible that both may have been repeated, but the more probable hypothesis is, that we have here an example of the natural dislocation of the exact order of events that followed one upon another in rapid sequence, and at a time when men's minds were heavy with confused sorrow.

(30) **Before the cock crow twice.**—The word "twice" is omitted in many MSS. It agrees, however, with the emphatic mention of the cock crowing a "second time" in verse 71, and with the form of prediction in verse 72, and may fairly be regarded as the true reading, the omission in some MSS. being accidental.

Thou shalt deny me thrice.—The agreement of all the four Evangelists places the fact of the prediction beyond the shadow of a doubt, and the prevision which it implies is obviously more than a

general insight into the instability of the disciple's character, and involves a power essentially superhuman. We must not forget what the disciple could not fail to remember, that to the sin thus foretold was attached the penalty, that he who was guilty of it should be "denied before the angels of God" (Luke xii. 9). That was the law of retribution, but as with all such laws, the penalty might be averted by repentance.

(31) **He spake the more vehemently.**—The Greek tense implies frequent and continuous speaking. The Greek adverb conveys the idea of *superfluous* iteration.

If I should die with thee.—Though foremost in announcing the resolve, Peter was not alone in it. Thomas had spoken like words before (John xi. 16), and all felt as if they were prepared to face death for their Master's sake. To them He had been not only "righteous," but "good" (chap. x. 17; John vii. 12) and kind, and therefore for Him "they even dared to die." (Comp. Rom. v. 7.)

(32) **They came to a place.**—In the interval between verses 35, 36, we have probably to place the discourses in John xv. (the reference to the vine, probably

Gethsemane: "and he saith ^{a Matt. 26. 36.} to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray. ⁽³³⁾ And

he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed,

suggested by one which was putting forth its leaves in the early spring), xvi., and the great prayer of intercession in xvii. As St. John alone has recorded them, it is probable that he alone entered into their meaning, while others either did not hear them, or listened to them as above their reach, and asked their child-like questions. St. Luke records what we may look on as the germ of the great intercession, in our Lord's words to Peter, "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not" (Luke xxii. 32).

A place named Gethsemane.—The word means "oil-press," and was obviously connected with the culture of the trees from which the Mount took its name. St. John's description implies that it was but a little way beyond the brook Kidron (xviii. 1), on the lower western slope of the mount. There was a garden (or rather orchard) there which was the wonted resort of our Lord and the disciples when they sought retirement. The eight olive-trees now growing in the places shown as Gethsemane, venerable as their age is, can hardly have been those that then grew there, as Josephus expressly records that Titus ordered all the trees in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem to be cut down, and the Tenth legion was actually encamped on the Mount of Olives (Jos. Wars, v. 2, § 3). They probably represent the devotion of pilgrims of the fourth or some later century, who re-planted the hallowed site.

Sit ye here, while I shall

pray.—Literally, *till I shall have prayed*. Partly in compassion to the weakness and weariness of the disciples, partly from the sense of the need of solitude in the highest acts of communing with His Father, as in chap. i. 35, vi. 46, the Son of Man withdraws for a little while from converse with those whom, up to this time, He had been strengthening. He had been (as in John xvii.) praying for them; He now needs to pray for Himself.

⁽³³⁾ He taketh with him Peter and James and John.—The favoured three, as before at the Transfiguration, and in the death-chamber in the house of Jairus (chap. v. 37, ix. 2; Matt. xvii. 1), were chosen out of the chosen. Their professions of devotion justified, as it were, the belief that they, at least, could "watch and pray" with Him. The nearness and sympathy of friends were precious even when personal solitude was felt to be a necessity.

And began to be sore amazed.—Note St. Mark's use of the stronger word as compared with St. Matthew's "to be sorrowful." The Greek word for "to be very heavy" occurs only here, in the parallel passage of Matt. xxvi. 37, and Phil. ii. 26, where it is translated "full of heaviness." Its primary meaning is thought by some philologists to have been that of "satiety," hence, "loathing" and "ill at ease." Others, however, find its root-thought in being "far from home," and so weary and

and to be very heavy;
⁽³⁴⁾ and saith unto them,
 My soul is exceeding
 sorrowful unto death:
 tarry ye here, and watch.
⁽³⁵⁾ And he went forward

a little, and fell on the
 ground, and prayed that,
 if it were possible, the
 hour might pass from him.
⁽³⁶⁾ And he said, Abba,
 Father, all things are pos-

perplexed. There is, it is obvious, a mysterious contrast between the calm, triumphant serenity which had shone in the look and tone of the Son of Man up to this moment, and had reached its highest point in the prayer of John xvii., and the anguish and distress that were now apparent. The change has, however, its manifold analogies in the experience of those who are nearest to their Master in sufferings and character. They, too, know how suddenly they may pass from confidence and joy as to a horror of great darkness. And in His sufferings we must remember there was an element absolutely unique. It was His to "tread the wine-press" alone (Isa. lxiii. 3). It was not only, as it might be with other martyrs, the natural shrinking of man's nature from pain and death, nor yet the pain of finding treachery and want of true devotion where there had been the promise of faithfulness. The intensity of His sympathy at that moment made the sufferings and sins of mankind His own, and the burden of those sins weighed upon His soul as greater than He could bear (Isa. liii. 4—6).

⁽³⁴⁾ **Exceeding sorrowful unto death.**—The infinite sadness of that hour leads the Master to crave for sympathy from the three who were, most of all, His brothers. If they may not see, or fully hear, the throes of that agony, as though

the pangs of death had already fallen on Him, it will be something to know that they are at least watching with Him, sharers in that awful vigil.

⁽³⁵⁾ **He went forward a little.**—St. Luke adds (xxii. 41) "about a stone's cast." The eight were left, we may believe, near the entrance of the garden; the three, "apart by themselves," further on; the Master, still further, by Himself. The three heard the words that came from His lips as with a half-consciousness which revived afterwards in memory, but they were then numbed and stupefied with weariness and sorrow. It was now near the dawning of the day, and their eyes had not closed in sleep for four-and-twenty hours.

⁽³⁶⁾ **Take this cup from me.**—We shrink instinctively from analysing or commenting on the utterances of that hour of agony. But, happily, words are given us where our own words fail. Thus it was, we are told, that "He learned obedience by the things that He suffered" (Heb. v. 8). He had spoken before to the very disciples who were now near Him of the "cup" which His Father had given Him to drink (Matt. xx. 23). Now the "cup" is brought to His lips, and His human will at once shrinks from it and accepts it (comp. John xii. 27). The prayer which He had taught His disciples to use, "Lead us not into tempta-

sible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt. ⁽³⁷⁾ And he cometh, and findeth

them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldest not thou watch one hour? ⁽³⁸⁾ Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter

tion," is now His prayer, but it is subordinated to that other prayer, which is higher even than it, "Thy will be done." In the prayer "If it be possible" we recognise, as in chap. xiii. 32, the natural, necessary limits of our Lord's humanity. In one sense "with God all things are possible," but even the Divine Omnipotence works through self-imposed laws, in the spiritual as in the natural world ("He cannot deny Himself," 2 Tim. ii. 13), and there also ends cannot be obtained except through their appointed and therefore necessary means. God might have redeemed mankind, men have rashly said, without the sufferings and death of the Son of Man, but the higher laws of the Divine Government made such a course, if we may venture so to speak, morally impossible. The Christ "must needs suffer" (Luke xxiv. 26).

The record of the word "Abba" as actually uttered, is peculiar to St. Mark, and takes its place with the "Ephphatha" of chap. vii. 34, the "Talitha cumi" of chap. v. 41, the "Rabboni" of chap. x. 51, as illustrating St. Mark's characteristic vividness as a narrator. We perhaps find traces of the impression it made on the minds of men in the "Abba" of Rom. viii. 15, Gal. iv. 6.

⁽³⁷⁾ And he cometh and findeth them sleeping.—Perhaps to both the groups—first the three and then of the eight. All

were alike sleeping—as St. Luke (xxii. 45) characteristically adds, "sleeping for sorrow."

Simon, sleepest thou?—Note that while St. Matthew and St. Luke give the question in the plural, St. Mark reports it in the singular, and joins it with the emphatic utterance of the name of the disciple. His report, too, includes the two questions which appear separately in the other two Gospels.

Couldest thou not watch . . . ?—Better, *Hadst thou not strength to watch?* In St. Matthew (xxvi. 40) the question, though addressed to Peter, is plural in its form. The disciple had boasted of his readiness to do great things. He could not so much as rouse himself to watch for one hour. The last word may be fairly taken as partly measuring the time that had passed since their Master had left them. Few as are the recorded words, they spoke of an agony—such as that which St. Luke describes more fully (xxii. 44)—the sweat as great drops of blood—which was more than momentary. As the words are reported we must believe that the disciples were just so far roused as to hear them, and that they sank back powerless into slumber.

⁽³⁸⁾ **Watch ye, and pray.**—The first word is eminently characteristic of our Lord's teaching at this period (Matt. xxiv. 32; xxv. 13). It became the watchword of the early disciples (1 Cor. xvi. 13;

into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak. ⁽³⁹⁾ And again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same words.

⁽⁴⁰⁾ And when he returned, he found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy,) neither wist they what to answer him. ⁽⁴¹⁾ And he

Col. iv. 2; 1 Thess. v. 6; 1 Pet. v. 8). It left its mark, as has been said above, in the history of Christendom in the new names of Gregory, and Vigilius, and Vigilantius, "the watcher."

Lest ye enter into temptation—i.e., as in the Lord's Prayer, to which our Lord manifestly recalls the minds of the disciples—the *trial* of coming danger and persecution. In their present weakness that trial might prove greater than they could bear, and therefore they were to watch and pray, *in order that* they might not pass by negligence into too close contact with its power.

The spirit truly is ready.—The Greek adjective has a somewhat stronger force. Better, *eager*. There is a tenderness in the warning which is very noticeable. The Master recognises the element of good, their readiness to go with Him to prison or to death, in their higher nature. But the spirit and the flesh were contrary the one to the other (Gal. v. 17); and therefore they could not do the things that they would, without a higher strength than their own.

⁽³⁹⁾ **He prayed, and spake the same words.**—In St. Matthew's report (xxvi. 42) there is a slight change of tone perceptible in this prayer as compared with the first. "If this cup may not pass from me." It is, to speak after the manner of men, as though the conviction that it was not

possible that the cup could pass away from Him had come with fuller clearness before His mind, and He was learning (Heb. v. 8) to accept it. He finds the answer to the former prayer in the continuance, not the removal, of the bitter agony that preyed on His spirit. It is probably at this stage of the trial that we are to place the sweat like "great drops of blood" and the vision of the angel which we find in Luke xxii. 43, 44.

The fact is suggestive, as indicating that there is a repetition in prayer which indicates not formalism, but intensity of feeling. Lower forms of sorrow may, as it were, play with grief and vary the forms of its expression, but the deepest and sharpest agony is content to fall back upon the iteration of the self-same words. Comp., as an instance of the same tendency in another form of sorrow, 2 Sam. xviii. 33.

⁽⁴⁰⁾ **And when he returned, he found them asleep again.**—The motive of this return we may reverently believe to have been, as before, the craving for human sympathy in that hour of awful agony. He does not now rouse them or speak to them. He looks on them sorrowfully, and they meet His gaze with bewildered and stupefied astonishment. "They wist not what to answer Him."

⁽⁴¹⁾ **And he cometh the third time.**—We may note St.

cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take *your* rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁽⁴²⁾ Rise

^a Matt.
26, 47.

up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand.

⁽⁴³⁾ And immediately,^a while he yet spake, cometh Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and

Mark's omission of the third repetition of the prayer.

Sleep on now, and take your rest.—There is an obvious difficulty in these words, followed as they are so immediately by the "Rise, let us be going" of the next verse. We might, at first, be inclined to see in them a shade of implied reproach. "Sleep on now, if sleep under such conditions is possible; make the most of the short interval that remains before the hour of the betrayal comes." Something of this kind seems obviously implied, but the sudden change is perhaps best explained by the supposition that it was not till after these words had been spoken that the Traitor and his companions were seen actually approaching, and that it was this that led to the words seemingly so different in their purport, bidding the slumberers to rouse themselves from sleep. The past, which, as far as their trial went, might have been given to sleep, was over. A new crisis had come, calling for action. We call to mind, as perhaps the disciples did, how the self-same words "take your rest" had once been uttered under far different conditions (chap. vi. 31).

It is enough.—Peculiar to St. Mark, and probably noting the transition from the half-reproachful permission, "Sleep on now, and

take your rest," to the emphatic and, as it were, startled exclamation, "the hour is come."

Is betrayed.—The tense, as in St. Matthew, is present, "is at this moment *being betrayed*."

⁽⁴²⁾ **Rise up, let us go.**—It is obvious that the latter clause does not involve any suggestion of flight, but rather a call to confront the danger.

⁽⁴³⁾ **A great multitude with swords and staves.**—St. John's account (xviii. 3) is fuller. The multitude included (1) *the* band (not "*a* band," as in the Authorised version), *i.e.*, the cohort (the same word as in Acts x. 1) of Roman soldiers sent by Pilate to prevent a tumult. These probably were armed with swords; (2) the officers of the chief priests, probably the Levites or Nethinim, who were the guards of the Temple, armed with "staves" or "clubs." He adds, also, what lay in the nature of the case, that they were provided with "lanterns and torches" as well as weapons. It was now near the hour of dawn, but they must have left the city while there was at best only moonlight to guide them. They bent their steps to Gethsemane, as that was known to Judas as one at least of our Lord's chosen resorts (John xviii. 2), in which, we may well believe, He had spent some hours

staves, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. ⁽⁴⁴⁾ And he that betrayed him had given them a token, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; take him, and lead *him* away safely. ⁽⁴⁵⁾ And as soon as he was

come, he goeth straightway to him, and saith, Master, master; and kissed him.

⁽⁴⁶⁾ And they laid their hands on him, and took him. ⁽⁴⁷⁾ And one of them that stood by drew a sword, and smote a servant of the

of each of the four preceding nights.

⁽⁴⁴⁾ **Whomsoever I shall kiss.**—It is probable, from the known customs (1) of the Jews, and (2) of the early Christians (Rom. xvi. 16; 1 Thess. v. 26) that this was the usual salutation of the disciples to their Master. St. John, it may be noted, makes no mention of the sign; probably because here, as elsewhere, he seeks to give touches that others had passed over, rather than to repeat what the oral or written teaching of the Church had already made familiar. So he alone relates (xix. 4—9) the words and look and tone with which our Lord met those who were come to seize him.

Take him.—Better, *seize*.

⁽⁴⁵⁾ **Master, master.**—Better, *Rabbi, Rabbi*. All the MSS., both of St. Mark and St. Matthew, give the Hebrew word, and not its Greek equivalent. The Greek word for "hail," which we find in St. Matthew (xxvi. 50), is somewhat more familiar than the English has come to be for us. It was, we may believe, the disciples' usual greeting. He was met, as St. Matthew relates (xxvi. 49).

⁽⁴⁷⁾ **One of them that stood by.**—It is remarkable that, though all four Gospels record the fact,

St. John alone (xviii. 10, 11) records the names both of the disciple who struck the blow (Peter) and of the servant whom he attacked. The reticence of the first three Gospels in this instance, as in that of the woman with the box of ointment, must have been obviously intentional; but it is not easy to conjecture its motive. Possibly there may have been a natural reluctance in the current oral teaching which formed the basis of the first three Gospels to give publicity to an act which was so strikingly at variance both with the mind of Christ and with the Apostle's own teaching (1 Pet. ii. 13—15).

Drew a sword.—We learn from Luke xxii. 33 that there were but two swords in the whole company of the twelve. One of these naturally was in Peter's possession, as being the foremost of the whole band.

A servant of the high priest.—St. John (xviii. 11), with the precision characteristic of his narrative, especially in this part of the Gospel history, gives the servant's name as Malchus, and states that it was the right ear that was cut off. He came, it would seem, not as one of the officers of the Temple, but as the personal slave of Caiaphas. Three of the

high priest, and cut off his ear. ⁽⁴⁸⁾ And Jesus answered and said unto them, *Are ye come out, as against a thief, with swords*

and with staves to take me? ⁽⁴⁹⁾ I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took me not: but the scriptures must be ful-

four Gospels use the diminutive form of the Greek for "ear," St. Luke only (xxii. 50) giving the primitive word. It is doubtful, however, whether the former was used with any special significance. St. Luke also (xxii. 51) alone records the fact that our Lord touched and healed the wound thus made. St. Matthew's record (xxii. 51—54) is here the fullest; St. Mark reports none of the words; St. Luke (xxii. 51) gives only the calming utterance, "Suffer ye thus far;" St. John (xviii. 11) adds to the command to put the sword into its sheath the words, "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" a manifest echo of the prayer that had been uttered before in the hour of His agony. The words which St. Matthew gives ("All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword") are obviously not a general rule declaring the unlawfulness of all warfare, offensive or defensive, but are limited in their range by the occasion. Resistance at that time would have involved certain destruction. More than that, it would have been fighting, not for God, but against Him, because against the fulfilment of His purpose. It is, however, a natural inference from the words to see in them a warning applicable to all analogous occasions. In whatever other cause it may be lawful to use carnal weapons, it is not wise or right to draw the sword

for Christ and His Truth. (Comp. 2 Cor. x. 4.)

⁽⁴⁸⁾ *Are ye come out, as against a thief?*—Better, *as against a robber with swords and clubs?* The word is the same as that used in John xviii. 40, of Barabbas, and points to the brigand chieftain of a lawless band, as distinct from the petty thief of towns or villages.

⁽⁴⁹⁾ *I was daily with you in the temple teaching.*—The statement referred primarily, perhaps, to what had passed in the three days immediately preceding, but it looks beyond this in its wide generality, and is important as an indication, occurring in one of the first three Gospels, of a ministry in Jerusalem, which their narratives pass over. The "sitting" in the Temple, as in St. Matthew's report (xxvi., 56), implied that our Lord took the position of a teacher more or less recognised as such (comp. Matt. v. 1, Luke iv. 20), not that of one who was addressing the multitude without authority.

But the scriptures must be fulfilled.—We have here our Lord's own witness to the disciples and the multitude, that the treachery and violence of which He was the victim were all working out a divine purpose, and (as in verse 49) fulfilling the Scriptures in which that purpose had been shadowed forth. The Greek is elliptical in its structure; literally, *but that the Scriptures may be ful-*

filled. ⁽⁵⁰⁾ And they all forsook him, and fled.

⁽⁵¹⁾ And there followed him a certain young man,

having a linen cloth cast about *his* naked body; and the young men laid hold on him: ⁽⁵²⁾ and he left the

filled, with the implied clause, "all this comes to pass." The fragmentary character of the sentence suggests the thought of St. Peter's having caught the very syllables as they passed from his Lord's lips.

⁽⁵⁰⁾ **They all forsook him, and fled.**—We read with a sorrowful surprise of this cowardly abandonment. Better things, we think, might have been expected of those who had professed their readiness to go with Him to prison and to death. Yet we may remember (1) the weariness and exhaustion which had overcome them, making the resolve and courage, to say the least, more difficult; and (2) that they had been told not to resist, and that flight might seem to them the only alternative to resistance.

⁽⁵¹⁾ **And there followed him a certain young man.**—The remarkable incident that follows is narrated by St. Mark only. It had clearly made a deep impression on the minds of some of the disciples (probably enough on that of Peter), from whom, directly or indirectly, the report came. Who it was that appeared in this strange fashion we are left to conjecture. Some have supposed that it was St. Mark himself, but for this there is obviously no ground but the fact that this Evangelist alone records it. Others (Epiphanius, *adv. Hær.* lxxviii. 13, 69) have inferred from the "linen garment," that it was James the "brother of the Lord," whom Hegesippus describes (Euseb.

Hist. ii. 23) as habitually so apparelled. A careful examination of the facts suggests another conclusion as probable. (1) The man was "young," and the self-same term is applied to the ruler who had great possessions (Matt. xix. 20). (2) He had apparently been sleeping, or, it may be, watching, not far from Gethsemane, with the linen sheet wrapped round him (the Greek word *sindon* is described by Hebrew writers as being used as we use a night-shirt), and had been roused by the approach of the officers and the crowd (the word "naked" in this context almost necessarily implies that he had no other covering). This suggests one who lived somewhere on the Mount of Olives, and so far points to Lazarus or Simon of Bethany, as the only two conspicuous disciples in that neighbourhood. (3) He was one who so loved our Lord that he went on following Him when all the disciples forsook Him and fled, and this also was what might be expected from Lazarus. On the supposition suggested in (1), he was now obeying almost literally the command, "Take up thy cross, and follow Me." (See Matt. xix. 16—22.) (4) He was one whom the officers (the words "the young men" are omitted in the better MSS.) were eager to seize, when they allowed all the disciples to go their way, and this agrees with the command which had been given by the priests, that they should take and kill Lazarus also (John

linen cloth, and fled from them naked.

⁽⁵³⁾ And they led Jesus away to the high priest: ^a a Matt. 26. 57. and with him were assem-

bled all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes. ⁽⁵⁴⁾ And Peter followed him afar off, even into the palace of the high

xii. 10). (5) As the "linen sheet" or *sinclon* (see Matt. xxvii. 59) was especially used both as a night-dress and for the burial of the dead, it is conceivable, on this supposition, that what had been the winding-sheet of the dead Lazarus had been kept and used by him in memory of his resurrection. (6) On the hypothesis thus suggested, the suppression of the name stands on the same footing as that of the name of the sister of Lazarus, who poured the precious ointment on our Lord's head at Bethany (Matt. xxvi. 7; Mark xiv. 3), whom the Evangelists must have known, but whom they mention simply as a "woman." Their lips were sealed as to the family of Bethany until the circumstances, whatever they may have been, that called for silence had passed away. It is obvious that so far as this identity is established it suggests many thoughts of profound interest. What had seemed impossible to men had proved possible with God (Matt. xix. 26). He who had gone away sorrowful because he had great possessions, had given freely to the poor (see Matt. xxvi. 6, 9; John xii. 5), and had proved more faithful than the Twelve, and so the last had become the first (Matt. xix. 30).

⁽⁵³⁾ To the high priest.—St. John alone, probably from the special facilities which he possessed as known to the high priest, records the preliminary examination before

Annas (John xviii. 13, 19—24). It was obviously intended to draw from our Lord's lips something that might serve as the basis of an accusation. Caiaphas, we must remember, had already committed himself to the policy of condemnation (John xi. 49, 50). The whole history that follows leaves the impression that the plans of the priests had been hastened by the treachery of Judas.

Were assembled all the chief priests, and the elders, and the scribes.—It was against the rules of Jewish law to hold a session of the Sanhedrin or Council for the trial of capital offences by night. Such an assembly on the night of the Paschal Supper must have been still more at variance with usage, and the fact that it was so held has, indeed, been urged as a proof that the Last Supper was not properly the Passover. The present gathering was therefore an informal one—probably a packed meeting of those who were parties to the plot, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathæa, and probably not a few others, like the young "ruler" of Luke xviii. 18, not being summoned. When they had gone through their mock trial, and day was dawning (Luke xxii. 68), they transformed themselves into a formal court, and proceeded to pass judgment.

⁽⁵⁴⁾ Peter followed him afar off.—We find from St. John's narrative (chap. xviii. 15), here much

priest: and he sat with the servants, and warmed himself at the fire. ⁽⁵⁶⁾ And the chief priests and all the council sought for witness against Jesus to put him to death; ^a and found none. ⁽⁵⁶⁾ For many

^a Matt.
26. 59.

bare false witness against him, but their witness agreed not together. ⁽⁵⁷⁾ And there arose certain, and bare false witness against him, saying, ⁽⁵⁸⁾ We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made

the fullest, that it was through him that Peter found admission. He sat in the "court" "with the servants" and the slaves, who, in the chill of the early dawn, had lighted a charcoal fire. Female slaves who acted as gate-keepers were passing to and fro. The cold night air had told on the disciple, and he too, weary and chilled, drew near the fire and warmed himself.

Sat . . . and warmed himself.—Better, *was sitting and warming himself*.

With the servants.—Better, *with the officers*, as in John xviii. 18, where they are distinguished from the "servants" or "slaves."

At the fire.—Literally, *at the light*; the word bringing out very vividly the effect of the glare of the charcoal fire on St. Peter's face.

⁽⁵⁵⁾ **Sought for witness.**—The tense of the Greek verb implies a continued process of seeking. The attempt to draw the materials for condemnation from the lips of the accused had failed. 'The law of Moses required at least two witnesses (Deut. xxii. 6; xix. 15), and these, it is natural to believe, were examined independently of each other. The haste which marked all the proceedings of the trial had probably prevented previous concert, and the judges could not, for very shame, convict in the face of

a glaring discrepancy, probably as to time and place, between the witnesses who thus offered themselves.

⁽⁵⁶⁾ **Their witness agreed not together.**—St. Mark gives what St. Matthew only implies, as the cause of the failure.

⁽⁵⁷⁾ **There arose certain.**—St. Mark is here less definite than St. Matthew, who, writing for Jews, was apparently anxious to show that the rule which required "two or three witnesses" in support of a criminal charge had barely been complied with.

⁽⁵⁸⁾ **I will destroy this temple.**—It is remarkable that the two Gospels which record the charge do not record the words in which it had its starting-point. Apparently, the second cleansing of the Temple (chap. xi. 15) had revived the memory of the first, and brought back to men's minds the words that had then been spoken—"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John ii. 19). What was now reported was a sufficiently natural distortion of what had then been said. St. Mark adds that even then the witnesses did not agree. There were still discrepancies as to time, place, and the exact words, that did not fit in with the established rules of evidence.

with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands. ⁽⁵⁹⁾ But neither so did their witness agree together. ⁽⁶⁰⁾ And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus,

saying, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? ⁽⁶¹⁾ But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ,

This temple.—The word here, as in Matt. xxvi. 61 and John ii. 19, is that which indicates generally the sanctuary or shrine, and here the "Holy Place" of the Temple.

Made with hands . . . made without hands.—The antithesis is peculiar to St. Mark, but we may, perhaps, trace an echo of it in the "more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands," of Heb. ix. 11, and it reproduces the thought implied in St. John's words (chap. ii. 21) that "He spake of the temple of His body."

⁽⁵⁹⁾ **Neither so did their witness agree together.**—This, again, is peculiar to St. Mark. We are not told in what respects their evidence failed to agree; possibly, as before, in details of time and place, possibly in the absence or presence of the words reported in the previous verse.

⁽⁶⁰⁾ **Answerest thou nothing?**—A different punctuation gives, *Answerest Thou nothing to what these witness against Thee!* as one question. The question implies a long-continued silence, while witness after witness were uttering their clumsy falsehoods, the effect of which it is not easy to realise without a more than common exercise of what may be called dramatic imagination. I

remember hearing from a distinguished scholar who had seen the Ammergau Passion-mystery, that, as represented there, it came upon him with a force which he had never felt before. In the silence itself we may perhaps trace a deliberate fulfilment of the prophecy of Isa. liii. 7. In 1 Pet. ii. 23 we find a record of the impression which that fulfilment made on the disciples.

What is it . . . ?—The question was clearly put, as like questions had been before Annas (John xviii. 19), with the intention of drawing out something that would ensure condemnation.

⁽⁶¹⁾ **Art thou the Christ?**—As St. Matthew reports the question (chap. xxvi. 63) it was accompanied by a solemn adjuration. The appeal was one of unusual solemnity. All else had failed to break through the silence, but this would surely rouse Him. Technically, the oath thus tendered to the accused was of the nature of an oath of compurgation, such as that recognised in Ex. xxii. 11, Num. v. 19—22, 1 Kings viii. 31, but it was skilfully worded so as to force upon our Lord the alternative either of denying what indeed He was, or of making a confession which would be treated as blasphemy. The records of St. John's

the Son of the Blessed?

⁽⁶²⁾ And Jesus said, I am : and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power,^a and coming in the clouds of heaven.

^a Matt. 24. 30.

⁽⁶³⁾ Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses? ⁽⁶⁴⁾ Ye have heard the blasphemy : what think ye? And they all

Gospel (John v. 18; viii. 58; ix. 37; x. 24) show us that the priests had good means of knowing what answer to expect.

⁽⁶²⁾ **I am.**—The silence was broken as they expected. He was indeed what the words they had uttered implied. More than this, He was also the Son of Man of Daniel's vision (Dan. vii. 13), the Head of an everlasting kingdom. The very words "I am," must have recalled their solemn utterance with a yet profounder meaning in John viii. 58. No words in the whole Gospel records are more decisive against the views of those who would fain see in our Lord only a great moral teacher, like Socrates or Çakya Mouni. At the very crisis of His history, when denial would have saved His life, He asserts His claim to be much more than this, to be all that the most devout Christians have ever believed Him to be. At such a moment, when men stand face to face with seeming failure and with death, dreams and delusive claims for the most part melt away. Here claims that men have presumed to think of as delusive were strengthened and intensified, and reproduced as in the calmness of assured conviction.

The right hand of power.—The Greek article here can hardly be reproduced in English, but it is well to remember that our Lord speaks of "*the* power," that which, as in the doxology of the Lord's

Prayer (Matt. vi. 13), belonged pre-eminently to the Eternal. (Comp. Luke i. 35.)

⁽⁶³⁾ **Then the high priest rent his clothes.**—The act was almost as much a formal sign of condemnation as the putting on of the black cap by an English judge. The judges in a Jewish trial for blasphemy were bound to rend their clothes in twain when the blasphemous words were uttered, and the clothes so torn were never afterwards to be mended. In Acts xiv. 14 the same act appears, on the part of Paul and Barnabas, as the expression of an impulsive horror, as it had done of old when Eliakim rent his clothes on hearing the blasphemies of Rab-shakeh (2 Kings xviii. 37). A comparison of the Greek word here and in Matt. xxvi. 65 shows that it included the tunic or under-garment as well as the cloak.

⁽⁶⁴⁾ **Guilty of death.**—In modern English the word "guilty" is almost always followed by the crime which a man has committed. In older use it was followed by the punishment which the man deserved. (Comp. Num. xxxv. 31.) The decision, as far as the meeting went, was unanimous. Sentence was passed. It remained, however, to carry the sentence into effect, and this, while the Roman governor was at Jerusalem, presented a difficulty which had to be met by proceedings of another kind. The

condemned him to be guilty of death. ⁽⁶⁵⁾ And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, Prophecy: and

b Matt. 26. 69.

the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands.

⁽⁶⁶⁾ And as Peter was beneath in the palace,^b there cometh one of the

Jews, or at least their rulers, who courted the favour of Rome, ostentatiously disclaimed the power of punishing capital offences (John xviii. 31).

⁽⁶⁵⁾ Some began to spit on him.—We learn from St. Luke (xxii. 63) that these acts of outrage were perpetrated, not by the members of the Sanhedrin, but by the officers who had the accused in their custody, and who, it would seem, availed themselves of the interval between the two meetings of the council to indulge in this wanton cruelty. Here, also, they were unconsciously working out a complete correspondence with Isaiah's picture of the righteous sufferer (Isa. l. 6). The word "buffeted" describes a blow with the clenched fist, as contrasted with one with the open palm. In St. Peter's reference to our Lord's example when he exhorts the slaves to whom he writes to bear their "buffetings" patiently, we may trace a distinct reminiscence of this phase of His sufferings (1 Pet. ii. 20).

And to cover his face.—It was this (recorded by St. Mark and St. Luke (xxii. 64), but not by St. Matthew) which gave point to the taunt "Prophecy." They blindfolded the Prophet, and then called on Him to use His power of supernatural vision.

The servants did strike him.—Better, as before, *the officers*.

The two forms of outrage, with the clenched fist, and with the open palm, are specified by both St. Matthew and St. Mark. The word for the latter outrage is the same as that in Matt. v. 39.

⁽⁶⁶⁾ As Peter was beneath in the palace.—Better, *was below in the court*. The word rendered "palace" here and in verse 54, is strictly the courtyard or quadrangle round which a house was built. It may be well to bring together the order of the Apostle's thrice-repeated denials.

(1) On his entry into the courtyard of the palace, in answer to the female slave who kept the door (John xviii. 17).

(2) As he sat by the fire warming himself, in answer (a) to another damsel (Matt. xxvi. 69), and (b) other by-standers (John xviii. 25; Luke xxii. 58), including (c) the kinsman of Malchus (John xviii. 26).

(3) About an hour later (Luke xxii. 59), after he had left the fire, as if to avoid the shower of questions, and had gone out into the porch, or gateway leading out of the courtyard, in answer (a) to one of the damsels who had spoken before (Mark xiv. 69; Matt. xxvi. 71), and again (b) to other by-standers (Luke xxii. 59; Matt. xxvi. 13; Mark xiv. 20).

There were thus three distinct occasions, but as the hasty words of denial rose to his lips, it is

maids of the high priest :

⁽⁶⁷⁾ and when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and said, And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth.

⁽⁶⁸⁾ But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest.

And he went out into the porch ; and the cock crew.

⁽⁶⁹⁾ And a maid saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by, This is *one* of them.

⁽⁷⁰⁾ And he denied it again. And a little after, they that stood by said again to

probable enough that they were repeated again and again on each occasion, and that several persons heard them.

As far as we can analyse the impulse which led to the denial, it was probably shame not less than fear. The feeling which had shown itself in the cry, "Be it far from thee, Lord," when he first heard of his Master's coming passion (Matt. xvi. 22), came back upon him, and he shrank from the taunts and ridicule which were sure to fall upon the followers of One whom they had acknowledged as the Christ, and whose career was ending in apparent failure. It was against that feeling of shame that our Lord on that occasion had specially warned him (chap. viii. 38). The element of fear also was, however, probably strong in Peter's nature. (Comp. Matt. xiv. 26—31; Gal. ii. 12.)

⁽⁶⁷⁾ **Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth.**—The order of the words varies in the MSS. ; but the better ones give the words as spoken with an emphatic scorn, "And thou also wast with the Nazarene Jesus."

⁽⁶⁸⁾ **And he went out into the porch.**—The noun is not the same as that used by St. Matthew, but signifies literally "the space

before the court," i.e., the vestibule—something more stately than a common gateway. Substantially, of course, it comes to much the same meaning.

⁽⁶⁹⁾ **A maid.**—Better, *the maid*—i.e., the one that had pointed him out before.

⁽⁷⁰⁾ **And thy speech agreeth thereto.**—The Galilean *patois* was probably stronger when he spoke under the influence of strong excitement. It was said to have, as its chief feature, a confused thick utterance of the guttural letters of the Hebrew alphabet, so that they could not be distinguished from each other, and the change of *Sh* into *Th*. It was, perhaps, a consequence of this that the Hebrew *Tsade* (*tz*), which was commonly represented in the LXX. by the Greek *Sigma* (*s*), was in the name of Nazareth represented by the Greek *Zeta* (*z*). Possibly it was the Apostle's utterance of this very word which showed from what province he had come. The fact is not without its interest as bearing on the interpretation of Matt. ii. 23. The half-detection which the remark implied—perhaps, also, some sense of shame at the provincialism attracting notice—led to the more vehement denial that followed. Singularly enough, the

Peter, Surely thou art one of them: for thou art a Galilæan, and thy speech agreeth *thereto*.⁽⁷¹⁾ But he began to curse and to swear, *saying*, I know not this man of whom ye speak.⁽⁷²⁾ And the second time

^a Matt.
26. 75.

¹ Or,
he wept
abundantly,
or, he
began to
weep.

the cock crew.^a And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept.¹

words, which seem so natural, are wanting in many of the best MSS., and may, therefore, possibly have been an interpretative addition, possibly made by St. Mark himself, in what we may call a revised edition of his Gospel.

⁽⁷¹⁾ **To curse and to swear.**—

We may infer from the two words that he used some common formula of execration, such as, *e.g.*, “God do so to me and more also” (1 Kings xix. 2; xx. 10), as well as the oath-formula, “By Heaven,” or “By the Temple.”

⁽⁷²⁾ **The second time the cock crew.**—St. Mark alone records the first cock-crow (verse 68). The Greek has no article; “*a* cock crew.” We find from chap. xiii. 35 that “cock-crowing” had become a familiar phrase, as with us, for the earliest hour of dawn.

When he thought thereon.—The Greek word is a somewhat peculiar one, and means literally “throwing at,” or “on.” The English version, following the Geneva, assumes that it means “casting his mind or thoughts,” just as “to reflect” is “to bend the mind,” and is possibly right. The marginal readings give two conjectures, most of the earlier English versions adopting the latter of the two “he began to weep.” Yet another may be found in the

idea that the word describes St. Peter’s action “casting himself down, he wept,” or, “shrouding his face, he wept” (each of which meaning has been maintained by many interpreters of credit), but there is not enough authority for any other interpretation to justify a change in the text.

Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said.—St. Luke records (xxii. 61) that at this moment, probably as he was passing from the council chamber, mocked and buffeted by the officers, “the Lord turned and looked upon Peter.” That glance, full, we must believe, of tenderest pity and deepest sadness, as of one who was moved not by anger but by sorrow, recalled him to his better self, and the flood-gates of penitence were opened. From that hour we lose sight of him till the morning of the Resurrection. We may infer from his then appearing in company with John (John xx. 3), that he turned in his contrition to the friend and companion of his early years, who had probably witnessed, or must have heard of, his denials, and was not repulsed. The fact that the record of his fall appears in every Gospel, may be noted as indicating that, in after years, he did not shrink from letting men know of his guilt, but

CHAPTER XV.—

(1) And straightway in the morning the chief priests

A.D. 33.

a Matt.
27. 1.

held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council,^a and bound

sought rather that they might find in him (as St. Paul afterwards in his experience, 1 Tim. i. 12—16) a proof of the mercy and tender pity of his Lord. It is, on the other hand, a significant fact that none of the disciples ever disputed his authority on the ground that he had thus sinned. It was enough that his Master had forgiven him.

XV.

(1) **Held a consultation.**—Better, *held a council*. (Comp. the use of the word in Acts xxv. 12.) Another formal meeting was held (according to the Jewish rule that the sentence of the judges was not to be given at the same sitting as the trial) to confirm the previous decision, and probably to determine on the next step to be taken. It ended, as the next verse shows, in sending our Lord to Pilate, and leaving to him the responsibility of punishing. They entered, as the sequel shows, on a kind of diplomatic struggle as to the limits of the ecclesiastical and imperial powers, the former seeking to make the latter its tool, the latter to avoid the responsibility of seeming to act in that character.

And the whole council.—The words in the Greek are in apposition with “the chief priests.” We do not know of any other elements in the Council of Sanhedrin than the priests, scribes, and elders, and it is possible that the writer may have added the words in the sense of “even the whole Council,” as giving the collective

word for the body of which the three constituent parts had been already named.

Bound Jesus.—This implies probably that His hands were tied behind Him, possibly His feet also so tied that any attempt to escape would be impossible.

Pilate.—It may be well to bring together the chief known facts as to the previous history of the Governor, or, more accurately, the Procurator, of Judæa, whose name is conspicuous as occupying a solitary prominence in the creeds of Christendom. He must have belonged, by birth or adoption, to the *gens* of the Pontii, one of whom, C. Pontius Telesinus, had been the leader of the Samnites in their second and third wars against Rome, B.C. 321—292. The *cognomen* Pilatus means “armed with the *pilum* or javelin,” and may have had its origin in some early military achievement. As applied, however, to Mount Pilatus in Switzerland, it has been conjectured that it is a contracted form of *Pileatus*, from *pileus*, a cap, and is applied to the mountain as having for the most part, a cloud-capped summit. The cap known by that name was often worn by soldiers instead of a helmet, and by Roman citizens generally, and hence it was commonly presented to emancipated slaves as a formal token of manumission (Suet. *Nero*, c. 37). Possibly, therefore, the name might imply that the Procurator belonged to the class of *libertini*, or freedmen. When Judæa became formally

Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him to Pilate. ⁽²⁾ And Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answering said unto him, Thou

^a Matt.
27. 13.

sayest it. ⁽³⁾ And the chief priests accused him of many things: but he answered nothing. ⁽⁴⁾ And Pilate asked him again,^a saying, Answerest thou nothing?

subject to the empire, on the deposition of Archelaus, a *procurator*, or collector of revenue, invested with judicial power, was appointed to govern it, subject to the Governor of Syria (Luke ii. 2), and resided commonly at Cæsarea. Pontius Pilate, of whose previous career we know nothing, was appointed, A.D. 25—26, as the sixth holder of that office. His administration had already, prior to our Lord's trial, been marked by a series of outrages on Jewish feelings. (1) He had removed the head-quarters of his army from Cæsarea to Jerusalem, and the troops brought their standards with the image of the emperor into the Holy City. The people were excited into frenzy, and rushed in crowds to Cæsarea to implore him to spare them this outrage on their religion. After five days of obstinacy and a partial attempt to suppress the tumult, Pilate at last yielded (Jos. *Ant.* xvii. 3 §§ 1, 2; *Wars*, ii. 9, §§ 2—4). (2) He had hung up in his palace at Jerusalem gilt shields inscribed with the names of heathen deities, and would not remove them till an express order came from Tiberius (Philo, *Leg. ad Cærum*, c. 38). (3) He had taken money from the Corban, or treasury of the Temple, for the construction of an aqueduct. This led to another tumult, which was suppressed by the slaughter not of the rioters only, but also of

casual spectators (Jos. *Wars*, ii. 9, § 4). (4) Lastly, on some unknown occasion, he had slain some Galileans while they were in the very act of sacrificing (Luke xiii. 1), and this had probably caused the ill-feeling between him and the tetrarch Antipas mentioned in Luke xxiii. 12. It is well to bear in mind these antecedents of the man, as notes of character, as we follow him through the series of vacillations which we now have to trace.

(3) **And the chief priests accused him.**—We learn from John xviii. 28 that the priests stayed outside the Prætorium "lest they should be defiled," and so be unable to eat the Passover, of which they had not as yet partaken.

(4) **And Pilate asked him.**—We may infer from the greater fulness with which St. John relates what passed between our Lord and Pilate, that here, too, his acquaintance with the high priest gave him access to knowledge which others did not possess, probably by enabling him to enter the Prætorium, which he, as having eaten his Passover-meal, would find no difficulty in doing. We learn from him (1) that in his first conversation with the accusers, Pilate endeavoured to throw the *onus* of judging upon them, and was met by the ostentatious disavowal of any power to execute judgment (John xviii. 28—32); (2) that the

behold how many things they witness against thee.

(⁶) But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marvelled. (⁶) Now at *that* feast he released unto them

one prisoner, whomsoever they desired. (⁷) And there was *one* named Barabbas, *which* lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had com-

single question which St. Matthew records was followed by a conversation in which our Lord declared that, though He was a King, it was not after the manner of the kingdoms of the world (John xviii. 33—38)—that His purpose in coming into the world had been to bear witness of the truth. The impression thus made on the mind of the Governor explains the desire which he felt to effect, in some way or other, the release of the accused.

(⁶) **Jesus yet answered nothing.**—Here, as in xiv. 60, we have to realise the contrast between the vehement clamour of the accusers, the calm, imperturbable silence of the accused, and the wonder of the judge at what was so different from anything that had previously come within the range of his experience.

(⁶) **Now at that feast he released.**—It is not known when the practice began, nor whether it was primarily a Jewish or a Roman one. The fact that the release of criminals was a common incident of a Latin *lectisternium*, or feast in honour of the gods, makes the latter the more probable. If introduced by Pilate (and this is the only recorded instance of the practice) it was, we may believe, a concession intended to conciliate those whom his previous severities had alienated. Before this stage of the proceedings we have to place (1) the second conference

between Pilate and the priests after his dialogue with our Lord (Luke xxiii. 4, 5), and their definite charge of sedition, now urged for the first time; and (2) his attempt, catching at the word “Galilee” as the scene of our Lord’s work, to transfer the responsibility of judging to Herod (Luke xxiii. 6—12).

He released . . . whomsoever they desired.—Both verbs are in the tense which implies custom.

(⁷) **One named Barabbas.**—There is considerable, though not quite decisive, evidence in favour of the reading in Matt. xxvii. 16, which gives “Jesus Barabbas” as the name of the prisoner. The name Barabbas (= son of Abbas, or of “a father”), like Bar-timæus and Bartholomew, was a patronymic, and it would be natural enough that the man who bore it should have another more personal name. We can easily understand (1) that the commonness of the name Jesus might lead to his being known to his comrades and to the multitude only or chiefly as Barabbas; and (2) that the reverence which men felt in after years for the Name which is above every name, would lead them to blot out, if it were possible, the traces that it had once been borne by the robber-chief. Of Barabbas St. Matthew (xxvii. 16) tells us that he was a “notable” or *celebrated* prisoner; St. John (xviii. 40) that he was a

mitted murder in the insurrection. ⁽⁸⁾ And the multitude crying aloud began to desire *him to do* as he had ever done unto them. ⁽⁹⁾ But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews?

⁽¹⁰⁾ For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy. ⁽¹¹⁾ But the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them. ⁽¹²⁾ And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye

robber; St. Luke (xxiii. 19) and St. Mark that he had taken a prominent part with some insurgents in the city, and that he, with them, had committed murder in the insurrection. The last recorded tumult of this kind was that mentioned above (Note on verse 2), as connected with Pilate's appropriation of the Corban. It is so far probable that this was the tumult in which Barabbas had taken part; and the supposition that he did so has at least the merit of explaining how it was that he came to be the favourite hero both of the priests and people. As the term *Abba* (=father) was a customary term of honour, as applied to a Rabbi (Matt. xxiii. 9), it is possible that the sobriquet by which he was popularly known commemorated a fact in his family history of which he might naturally be proud. "Jesus, the Rabbi's son," was a cry that found more favour than "Jesus the Nazarene."

Bound with them that had made insurrection.—The fact that Barabbas was a rebel as well as robber is stated by St. Luke also (xxiii. 19), but St. Mark alone records the fact that his fellow-insurgents were imprisoned with him.

⁽⁹⁾ Will ye that I release

unto you . . . ?—This, we must remember, was all but the last attempt of Pilate to shift off from himself the dreaded burden of responsibility. His use of the term "the king of the Jews" was probably an attempt to enlist the patriotic feeling of the multitude on the side of the prisoner. What he had seen and heard was enough to make him sure that there was no political danger in that acknowledgment.

⁽¹⁰⁾ **Had delivered him for envy.**—Pilate knew enough of the accusers to see through the hollowness of their pretended zeal for their own religion, or for the authority of the emperor. He found their real motive in "envy"—fear of the loss of influence and power, if the work of the new Teacher was to continue. (Comp. John xi. 47, 48).

⁽¹¹⁾ **The chief priests.**—Brief as the statement is, it implies much; the members of the Sanhedrin standing before Pilate's palace, mingling with the crowd, whispering—now to this man, now to that—praises of the robber, scoffs and slander against the Christ. As the next verse shows, they did their work effectively.

⁽¹²⁾ **Whom ye call the King of the Jews.**—We note in St

then that I shall do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews? ⁽¹³⁾ And they cried out again, Crucify him. ⁽¹⁴⁾ Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil

hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him.

⁽¹⁵⁾ And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them,

Mark's report something of the same determination to fasten upon the Jews the reproach that it was indeed their king whom he at their desire had condemned, as we see afterwards in the "title" which he placed upon the cross, and in his refusal to alter it (John xix. 21, 22).

⁽¹³⁾ **Crucify him.**—It may be noted that this was the first direct intimation of the mode of death to which the priests destined their prisoner. It was implied, indeed, in their fixed resolve to make the Roman governor the executioner of their sentence, as shown in the dialogue recorded by St. John (xviii. 31); but now the cry came from the multitude, as the result, we may believe, of the promptings described in verse 11, "Crucify Him!"—punish Him as the robber and the rebel are punished. Let him take the place of our Barabbas.

⁽¹⁴⁾ **Why, what evil hath he done?**—The question attested the judge's conviction of the innocence of the accused, but it attested also the cowardice of the judge. He was startled at the passionate malignity of the cry of the multitude and the priests, but had not the courage to resist it. We find from Luke xxiii. 22 that he had recourse to the desperate expedient of suggesting a milder punishment—"I will chastise" (i.e., scourge) "Him, and let Him go;" but the

suggestion itself showed his weakness, and therefore did but stimulate the crowd to persist in their demand for death.

⁽¹⁵⁾ **And so Pilate, willing to content the people.**—The word which St. Mark uses for "content" appears to be the Greek equivalent for the Latin *satisfacere*, and so takes its place in the evidence for St. Mark's connection with Rome and the Roman Church. We note here, as related only by St. Matthew, the incidents (1) of the warning message from Pilate's wife, and (2) of the Governor's washing his hands to symbolise his freedom from the blood of the Just One whom he condemned (Matt. xxvii. 19—24).

When he had scourged him.—The word used by St. Matthew, derived from the Latin *flagellum*, shows that it was the Roman punishment with knotted thongs of leather (like the Russian "knout" or the English "cat"), not the Jewish beating with rods (2 Cor. xi. 24, 25). The pictures of the Stations, so widely used throughout Latin Christendom, have made other nations more familiar with the nature of the punishment than most Englishmen are. The prisoner was stripped, sometimes entirely, sometimes to the waist, and tied by the hands to a pillar, with his back bent, so as to receive the full force of the blows. The scourge was of stout

and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified. ⁽¹⁶⁾ And the soldiers led him away into the hall, called Prætorium;

and they call together the whole band. ⁽¹⁷⁾ And they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his

leather weighted with lead or bones. Jewish law limited its penalty to forty stripes, reduced in practice to "forty stripes save one" (2 Cor. xi. 24; Deut. xxv. 3), but Roman practice knew no limit but that of the cruelty of the executioner or the physical endurance of the sufferer.

⁽¹⁶⁾ **Into the hall, called the Prætorium.**—The *Prætorium*, a word which, applied originally to the tent of the prætor, or general, and so to the head-quarters of the camp, had come to be used, with a somewhat wide range of meaning, (1) for the residence of a prince or governor; or (2) for the barracks attached to such a residence (as in Phil. i. 13); or (3) for any house as stately. Here (as in Acts xxiii. 35) it appears to be used in the first sense. Pilate's dialogue with the priests and people had probably been held from the portico of the Tower known as Antonia (Joseph. Wars i. 3, § 3), which rose opposite the Temple Court, and served partly as a fortress, partly as an official residence. The soldiers now took the prisoner into their barrack-room within.

The whole band.—The word used is the technical word for the cohort, or sub-division of a legion. As such, it consisted of six centuries, or six hundred soldiers, but like other technical terms, was, perhaps, used with a certain laxity of meaning.

⁽¹⁷⁾ **They clothed him with**

purple. The colour is called "purple" by St. Mark and St. John, "crimson" by St. Matthew. The two words probably indicated the same colour. In St. Matthew (xxvii. 28) we have a technical word—the *chlamys* or *paludamentum*, used for the military cloak worn by emperors in their character as generals, and by other officers of high rank (Pliny, xxii. 2, 3). It was probably some cast-off cloak of Pilate's own, or, possibly, that in which Herod had before arrayed Him (Luke xxiii. 11). Philo records a like mockery as practised upon an idiot at Alexandria, who was there made to represent Herod Agrippa II. (in *Flacc.* p. 980). It was but too common a practice to subject condemned prisoners before execution to this kind of outrage. Here the point of the mockery lay, of course, in the fact that their victim had been condemned as claiming the title of a King. They had probably seen or heard of the insults of like kind offered by Herod and his soldiers (Luke xxiii. 21), and now reproduced them with aggravated cruelty.

A crown of thorns.—The word is too vague to enable us to identify the plant with certainty, but most writers have fixed on the *Zizyphus Spina Christi*, known locally as the *Nebk*, a shrub growing plentifully in the valley of the Jordan, with branches pliant and flexible, and leaves of a dark glossy green, like ivy, and sharp prickly

head,⁽¹⁸⁾ and began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews! ⁽¹⁹⁾ And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing *their* knees worshipped him. ⁽²⁰⁾ And

a Matt
xv. 31

when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him. ⁽²¹⁾ And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian,^a who

thorns. The likeness of the crown or garland thus made to that worn by conquering kings and emperors, fitted it admirably for the purpose. The shrub was likely enough to be found in the garden attached to the Prætorium.

⁽¹⁸⁾ And began to salute him.—We have to represent to ourselves the whole cohort as joining in the derisive homage. The term in verse 19 implies a continued, not a momentary act—the soldiers of the cohort filing before the mock king, and kneeling as they passed.

⁽¹⁹⁾ They smote . . . did spit . . . worshipped.—All three verbs are in the tense which implies frequent repetition.

With a reed.—Here also the word is vague, and it may have been the stalk either of a sugarcane, a *Papyrus*, or an *Arundo*. In St. Matthew's report we find that it had been placed previously in the right hand of the prisoner. It represented, of course, the sceptre which, even under the Republic, had been wielded by generals in their triumphs, and which under the Empire, as with Greek and Eastern kings, had become the received symbol of sovereignty.

⁽²⁰⁾ They took off the purple.—At this point we have to insert the account which St. John gives (xix. 4, 5) of Pilate's last

attempt to rescue the "just Man" whom he had unjustly condemned. He showed the silent Sufferer in the mock insignia of royalty, as if asking them, Is not this enough? The cries of "Crucify Him!" were but redoubled, and once again the cowardly judge took his place in the official chair, and passed the final sentence. The "raiment" which they put on Him again included both the tunic and the cloak, or over-garment. In this case, the former was made without seam or opening (John xix. 23), and the mere act of drawing it roughly over the lacerated flesh must have inflicted acute agony.

⁽²¹⁾ They compel.—The word is the technical one for the forced service which Roman governors imposed, as convenience or caprice prompted, on the inhabitants of a conquered province (see Matt. v. 41). The act implied that our Lord was sinking beneath the burden, and that the soldiers began to fear that He might die of exhaustion before they reached the place of execution.

One Simon a Cyrenian.—There seems at this time to have been a flourishing settlement of Jews in Cyrene, originally planted by Ptolemy, the son of Lagus (Joseph. c. Apion ii. 4; Life, c. 76), and members of that community appear as prominent in

passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to

bear his cross. ⁽²²⁾ And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is,

the crowd of the day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 10), among the disputants who opposed Stephen (Acts vi. 9), and among the active preachers of the word (Acts xi. 20). Why, we ask, out of the whole crowd that was streaming to and fro, on the way to the place of execution, did the multitude seize on him? St. Mark's mention of him as the father of Alexander and Rufus, suggests the thought that his sons were afterwards prominent as members of the Christian community. May we not infer that he was suspected even then of being a secret disciple, and that this led the people to seize on him, and make him a sharer in the humiliation of his Master? If so, he had now, in the very letter of words which he may have heard from the lips of Jesus "to take up his cross and follow Him" (Matt. xvi. 24; Mark viii. 34). He was coming, St. Mark adds, "out of the country," and it may therefore probably be inferred that he had eaten his passover on the preceding evening.

The father of Alexander and Rufus.—The fact recorded here, and not elsewhere, is one of the most striking instances of the independent character of St. Mark's Gospel. It is clear that it had a special interest for himself and the readers for whom he wrote; what that interest was we can only conjecture. The two names were so common that we cannot arrive at more than a probable identification, but the mention of a "Rufus chosen

in the Lord" as prominent among the Christians of Rome (Rom. xvi. 13), taken together with the evidence which connects St. Mark's Gospel with that Church (see *Introduction*), tends to the conclusion that he was one of the two brothers thus mentioned. But if so, then we are led on to some other facts of no slight interest. St. Paul speaks of the mother of Rufus as being also his mother—i.e., endeared to him by many proofs of maternal kindness—and so we are led to the belief that the wife of Simon of Cyrene must, at some time or other, at Antioch or Corinth or Jerusalem, and afterwards at Rome, have come within the inner circle of St. Paul's friends. This, in its turn, connects itself with the prominence given to "men of Cyrene" in St. Luke's account of the foundation of the Gentile Church of Antioch (Acts xi. 20).

⁽²²⁾ **The place Golgotha.**—The other Gospels give the name with the definite article, as though it were a well-known locality. It is not mentioned, however, by any Jewish writer, and its position is matter of conjecture. It was "nigh unto the city" (John xix. 20), and therefore outside the walls (comp. Heb. xiii. 12). There was a garden in it (John xix. 41), and in the garden a tomb, which was the property of Joseph of Arimathea (Matt. xxvii. 60). A tradition, traceable to the fourth century, has identified the spot with the building known as the Church of the Sepulchre. One eminent archaeologist of our

being interpreted, The place
of a skull. ⁽²³⁾ And they

gave him to drink wine
mingled with myrrh: but

own time (Mr. James Fergusson) identifies it with the Dome of the Rock in the Mosque of El Aksa. Both sites were then outside the city, but were afterwards enclosed by the third wall, built by Herod Agrippa II. The name, as meaning "a skull" or "place of a skull," has been supposed by some to point to its being a common place of execution; but it is not probable that the skulls of criminals would have been left unburied, nor that a wealthy Jew should have chosen such a spot for a garden and a burial-place. The facts lead rather to the conclusion (1) that the name indicated the round, bare, skull-like character of the eminence which was so called; and (2) that it may have been suggested by the priests as a deliberate insult to the member of their own body who had refused to share their policy, and was at least suspected of discipleship, and whose garden, or orchard, with its rock-hewn sepulchre, lay hard by (verse 43; Luke xxiii. 51; John xix. 38). A later legend saw in the name a token that the bones of Adam were buried there, and that as the blood flowed from the sacred wounds on his skull his soul was translated to Paradise. The more familiar name of Calvary (Luke xxiii. 35) has its origin in the Vulgate rendering (*Calvarium* = a skull) of the Greek word *Kranion*, or *Cranium*, which that Evangelist actually uses. We have to note, as recorded only by St. Luke (xxiii. 27), the words of infinite pity spoken by the fainting and exhausted Sufferer to the women

who followed Him weeping, and bewailing Him.

⁽²³⁾ **Wine mingled with myrrh.**—Note this description as in part explaining St. Matthew's "wine mingled with gall." The animal secretion known as "gall" is clearly out of the question, and the meaning of the word is determined by its use in the Greek version of the Old Testament, where it stands for the "worm-wood" of Prov. v. 4, for the poisonous herb joined with "worm-wood" in Deut. xxix. 18. It was clearly something at once nauseous and narcotic, given by the merciful to dull the pain of execution, and mixed with the sour wine of the country and with myrrh to make it drinkable. It may have been hemlock, or even poppy-juice, but there are no materials for deciding. It is probable that the offer came from the more pitiful of the women mentioned by St. Luke (xxiii. 27) as following our Lord and lamenting. Such acts were among the received "works of mercy" of the time and place, and there was at Jerusalem a Sisterhood which had this as its chief object (Deutsch. *Essays*, p. 38). The "tasting" (Matt. xxvii. 34) implied a recognition of the kindly purpose of the act, but a recognition only. In the refusal to do more than taste we trace the resolute purpose to drink the cup which His Father had given Him to the last drop, and not to dull either the sense of suffering nor the clearness of His communion with His Father with the slumberous potion. The same draught was, we may believe,

he received it not. ⁽²⁴⁾ And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man

should take. ⁽²⁵⁾ And it was the third hour, and they crucified him. ⁽²⁶⁾ And the superscription of his accusation was written over,

offered to the two criminals who were crucified with Him, and accepted by them.

⁽²⁴⁾ **When they had crucified him.**—The cross employed in capital punishment varied in its form, being sometimes simply a stake on which the sufferer was impaled, sometimes consisting of two pieces of timber put together in the form of a T or an X (as in what we know as the St. Andrew's cross); sometimes in that familiar to us in Christian art as the Latin cross †. In this instance, the fact that the title or superscription was placed over our Lord's head, implies that the last was the kind of cross employed. In carrying the sentence of crucifixion into effect, the cross was laid on the ground, the condemned man stripped and laid upon it. Sometimes he was simply tied; sometimes, as here, nails driven through the hands and feet; sometimes a projecting ledge was put for the feet to rest on; sometimes the whole weight of the body hung upon the limbs that were thus secured. The clothes of the criminal were the usual perquisites of the executioners, and in this case included (as we find from John xix. 23) the tunic worn next the body as well as the outer garment. It was as the soldiers were thus nailing Him to the cross that He prayed, "Father, forgive them" (Luke xxiii. 34).

They parted his garments.—St. John (xix. 24) emphatically

records a yet more literal fulfilment of the words than that noted by St. Matthew. The thoughts of both disciples, we may believe, were turned to Ps. xxii. 18 by our Lord's utterance of its opening words (verse 34), and thus led to dwell on the manifold coincidences of its language with the facts of the Passion.

⁽²⁵⁾ **It was the third hour.**—The precise statement of the hour is peculiar to St. Mark, but it agrees with the narrative common to him with St. Matthew and St. Luke of the darkness that came over the land at the "sixth hour." (See Note on verse 33).

⁽²⁶⁾ **THE KING OF THE JEWS.**—This was what was technically known as the *titulus* (we find the word *titlos* in the Greek of John xix. 19)—the bill, or placard, showing who the condemned person was, and why he was punished. Each Gospel gives it in a slightly different form—Mark (xv. 26), "The King of the Jews;" Luke (xxiii. 38), "This is the King of the Jews;" John (xix. 19), "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." The variations are, perhaps, in part, explicable on the assumption of corresponding differences in the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin forms of the inscription, which reproduced themselves in the reports upon which the Gospel narratives are based. But in part also they may reasonably be ascribed to the natural variations

THE KING OF THE JEWS. ⁽²⁷⁾ And with him they crucify two thieves ; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left.

a Isa. 53.
12.

⁽²⁸⁾ And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors.^a ⁽²⁹⁾ And they that passed by railed on

sure to arise even among eye-witnesses, and, *à fortiori*, among those who were not eye-witnesses, as to the circumstantial details of events which they record in common. On grounds of ordinary likelihood St. John's record, as that of the only disciple whom we know to have been present at the crucifixion (John xix. 25), may claim to be the most accurate.

There was, apparently, a kind of rough tenderness towards the Man whom he had condemned in the form which Pilate had ordered. He would at least recognise as before (verse 9 ; John xviii. 39). His claims to be in some sense a King. The priests obviously felt it to imply such a recognition, a declaration, as it were, to them and to the people that One who had a right to be their King, who was the only kind of King they were ever likely to have, had died the death of a malefactor, and therefore they clamoured for a change, which Pilate refused to make (John xix. 20).

⁽²⁷⁾ And with him they crucify two thieves.—Better, *robbers*, the word being the same as that used of Barabbas (John xviii. 40). It would seem, as there is no record of their trial, as if they were already under sentence of death ; and it is probable enough that they were members of the same band, and had been sharers in the same insurrection. The legends of the Apocryphal Gospel of Nico-

demus (i. 10), give their names as Dysmas, the penitent, and Gysmas, the unpenitent, thief, and these names appear still in the Calvaries and Stations of Roman Catholic countries (as *e.g.* at Botzen, in the Tyrol), and in the works of early Italian art.

⁽²⁸⁾ And the scripture was fulfilled.—The verse, if genuine, would be noticeable as one of the few instances in which St. Mark dwells on the fulfilment of prophecy ; but it is omitted by nearly all the better MSS., and probably originated in a marginal note, calling attention to the fulfilment of the prophecy (Isa. liii. 12) which we find quoted by our Lord as about to be fulfilled, in Luke xxii. 37.

⁽²⁹⁾ And they that passed by.—The words bring before us the picture of a lounging crowd, strolling from one cross to the other, and mocking the central sufferer of the three. Rulers and chief priests (Matt. xxvii. 41 ; Luke xxiii. 35) were not ashamed to take part in the brutal mockery of a dying man. The spoken taunts were doubtless often repeated, and not always in the same form, but their burden is always the same.

Ah.—The interjection, which in its Greek form (*wa*) expresses a kind of inarticulate scorn, is peculiar to St. Mark, and may be noted as another instance of his habit of reproducing the very sounds that had been uttered.

Thou that destroyest the

him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, ⁽³⁰⁾ save thyself, and come down from the cross. ⁽³¹⁾ Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among

themselves with the scribes, He saved others; himself he cannot save. ⁽³²⁾ Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reviled

temple.—Our Lord had not been formally condemned on this charge, the evidence being insufficient, but it had clearly impressed itself on the minds of the people, and was probably that which most worked upon them to demand His death. The other words, "If thou be the Son of God" (Matt. xxvii. 40), referred to the actual condemnation on the ground of blasphemy (Matt. xxvi. 64, 65). We may reverently think of the form of the taunt as having recalled that of the Temptation in the Wilderness. Then, as now, the words "If thou be the Son of God" were as a challenge from the Power of Evil. Now, as then, they were met by the strength of Faith. To accept the challenge would have been to show that He did not trust the Father, just as it would have been not faith, but want of faith, to have cast Himself from the pinnacle of the Temple, and therefore to disown his Sonship in the very act of claiming it.

⁽³⁰⁾ **Save thyself.**—The order of the clauses should be inverted, *Come down from the cross, and save Thyself.*

⁽³¹⁾ **The chief priests mocking said among themselves.**—It would seem from St. Matthew's report, which names the scribes and elders also, as if all, or nearly all,

the members of the Sanhedrin—those, at least, who had taken part in the condemnation—had come to feast their eyes with the sight of their Victim's sufferings.

He saved others.—The mockers, as before (comp. John xi. 50, 51), bear unconscious witness to the truth. They referred, it may be, to the works of healing and the raising of the dead which had been wrought in Galilee and Jerusalem, but their words were true in a yet higher sense. He had come into the world to save others, regardless of Himself (1 Tim. i. 15).

⁽³²⁾ **Let Christ.**—Better, *the Christ*. The article is emphatic, and the word had not yet come to be used only as a name.

They that were crucified with him reviled him.—St. Luke alone reports (xxiii. 39—43) the change which afterwards came over one of them and made him, for all time to come, the representative instance of a late, yet availing repentance. The Apocryphal Gospel of the Infancy (c. 23) connects his faith with the legend that the Holy Family in their flight to Egypt had been attacked by a band, and that he alone had shown a reverential pity to the mother and the child.

him. ⁽³³⁾ And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth

^a Matt. 27. 45.

hour. ⁽³⁴⁾ And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani ?^a

⁽³³⁾ When the sixth hour was come.—The first three Gospels agree as to time and fact. Assuming them to follow the usual Jewish reckoning (as in Acts ii. 15; iii. 1; x. 3, 9) this would be noon, the fixing to the cross having been at the third hour, 9 A.M. (chap. xv. 25), and the darkness lasting till 3 P.M. St. John names the “sixth hour” as the time of our Lord’s final condemnation by Pilate, following apparently the Roman or modern mode of reckoning from midnight to noon. Looking to the facts of the case, it is probable that our Lord was taken to the high priest’s palace between 3 and 6 A.M. (the “cock-crow” of chap. xiii. 35). Then came the first hearing before Annas (John xviii. 13), then the trial before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin, then the formal meeting that passed the sentence. This would fill up the time probably till 6 A.M., and three hours may be allowed for the trials before Pilate and Herod. After the trial was over there would naturally be an interval for the soldiers to take their early meal, and then the slow procession to Golgotha, delayed, we may well believe, by our Lord’s falling, once or oftener, beneath the burden of the cross, and so we come to 9 A.M. for His arrival at the place of crucifixion. • In dealing with the whole question, however, we must remember that in the absence of clocks and watches, men’s measurements of time are apt to be less accurate than ours.

Darkness over the whole land.—Better so than the “earth” of the Authorised version of Luke xxiii. 44. The degree and nature of the darkness are not defined. The moon was at its full, and therefore there could be no eclipse. St. John does not name it, nor is it recorded by Josephus, Tacitus, or any contemporary writer. On the other hand, its appearance in records in many respects so independent of each other as those of the three Gospels places it, even on the common ground of historical probability, on a sufficiently firm basis, and early Christian writers, such as Tertullian (*Apol.* c. 21) and Origen (*c. Cels.* ii. 33), appeal to it as attested by heathen writers. The narrative does not necessarily involve more than the indescribable yet most oppressive gloom which seems to shroud the whole sky as in mourning (comp. Amos viii. 9, 10), and which, being a not uncommon phenomenon of earthquakes, may have been connected with that described in Matt. xxvii. 51. It is an indirect confirmation of the statement that about this time there is an obvious change in the conduct of the crowd. There is a pause and lull. The gibes and taunts cease, and the life of the Crucified One ends in a silence broken only by His own bitter cry

⁽³⁴⁾ Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani ?—The cry is recorded only by St. Matthew and St. Mark, and the form which St. Mark gives is a closer reproduction of the very

which is, being interpreted, |

| My God, my God, why hast

sounds of the Aramaic form of the word than that in St. Matthew, who gives the Hebrew as it stands in Ps. xxii. 1. The very syllables or tones dwelt in the memory of those who heard and understood it, and its absence from St. John's narrative was probably due to the fact that he had before this taken the Virgin-Mother from the scene of the crucifixion as from that which was more than she could bear (John xix. 27). To the Roman soldiers, to many of the bystanders, Greeks 'or Hellenistic Jews, the words would be, as the sequel shows, unintelligible. We shrink instinctively from any over-curious analysis of the inner feelings in our Lord's humanity that answered to this utterance. Was it the natural fear of death? or the vicarious endurance of the wrath which was the penalty of the sins of the human race, for whom, and instead of whom, He suffered? Was there a momentary interruption of the conscious union between his human soul and the light of His Father's countenance? or, as seems implied in John xix. 28, did He quote the words in order to direct the thoughts of men to the great Messianic prophecy which the Psalm contained? None of these answers is altogether satisfactory, and we may well be content to leave the mystery unfathomed, and to let our words be wary and few. We may remember (1) that both the spoken words of His enemies (verses 27—30 and Ps. xxii. 7, 8) and the acts of the soldiers (verse 24 and Ps. xxii. 16—18) must have recalled the words of that Psalm; (2) that

memory thus roused would pass on to the cry of misery with which the Psalm opened; (3) that our Lord as man was to taste death in all its bitterness for every man (Heb. ii. 9), and that He could not so have tasted it had His soul been throughout in full undisturbed enjoyment of the presence of the Father; (4) that the lives of the saints of God, in proportion to their likeness to the mind of Christ, have exhibited this strange union, or rather instantaneous succession, of the sense of abandonment and of intensest faith. The Psalmist himself, in this very Psalm, is one instance; Job (xix. 6—9, 23—26) and Jeremiah (xx. 7—9, 12, 13) may be named as others. Conceive this conflict—and the possibility of such a conflict is postulated in John xii. 27 and in the struggle of Gethsemane—and then, though we cannot understand, we may in part at least conceive, how it was possible for the Son of Man to feel for one moment that sense of abandonment, which is the last weapon of the Enemy. He tasted of despair as others had tasted, but in the very act of tasting, the words "My God" were as a protest against it, and by them He was delivered from it. The very Psalm which opened with the broken-hearted cry of the forsaken ended in the great joy of triumph, and the words which St. John (xix. 30) records "It is finished"—yet more those which we find in St. Luke (xxiii. 46) show that the Son of Man also passed out of darkness into the light of His Father's countenance. It is remarkable, whatever explanation may be given of it, that as

thou forsaken me? ⁽³⁵⁾ And some of them that stood by, when they heard *it*, said, Behold, he calleth Elias. ⁽³⁶⁾ And one ran and filled a sponge full of

vinegar, and put *it* on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take him down. ⁽³⁷⁾ And Jesus cried with a

these words are recorded by the first two Gospels only, so they are the only words spoken on the cross which we find in their report of the Crucifixion.

⁽³⁵⁾ **Behold, he calleth Elias.** There is no ground for looking on this as a wilful, derisive misinterpretation. The words may have been imperfectly understood, or some of those who listened may have been Hellenistic Jews. The dominant expectation of the coming of Elijah would predispose men to fasten on the similarity of sound, and the strange unearthly darkness would intensify the feeling that looked for a supernatural manifestation of his presence.

⁽³⁶⁾ **And one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar.**—The "vinegar" was the sour wine, or wine and water, which was the common drink of the Roman soldiers, and which they at an earlier stage, and as in derision (Luke xxiii. 36), had offered to the Sufferer. The sponge had probably served instead of a cork to the jar in which the soldiers had brought the drink that was to sustain them in their long day's work. Some one, whether soldier or Jew we know not, heard, not only the cry, "Eli, Eli, . . ." but the faint "I thirst," which St. John records as coming from the fevered lips (John xix. 28), and prompted by a rough pity, stretched out a cane, or stalk of hyssop (John xix. 29), with the sponge that had

been dipped in the wine upon it, and bore it to the parched lips of the Sufferer. It was not now refused (John xix. 30).

And gave him to drink.—The Greek verb is in the imperfect tense, perhaps as implying that while he was doing this, the others of whom St. Matthew speaks (xxvii. 49), tried to interrupt him.

Let us see whether Elias will come.—There is a distinct, though not important discrepancy here between St. Matthew and St. Mark, the latter assigning the words to the man who offered the sponge, the former to the others. Here again we have eager expectation rather than derision. Was the "great and dreadful day" (Mal. iv. 5) about to burst on them? Would the long-expected prophet at last appear? The sponge and vinegar would seem to minds thus on the stretch an unworthy interruption of the catastrophe of the great drama of which they were spectators.

⁽³⁷⁾ **And Jesus cried with a loud voice.**—It is well that we should remember what the words were which immediately preceded the last death-cry; the "It is finished" of John xix. 30, the "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit" of Luke xxiii. 46, expressing as they did, the fullness of peace and trust, the sense of a completed work.

It was seldom that crucifixion, as

loud voice, and gave up the ghost. ⁽³⁸⁾ And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.

⁽³⁹⁾ And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly

a punishment, ended so rapidly as it did here, and those who have discussed—what is hardly perhaps a fit subject for discussion—the physical causes of our Lord's death, have ascribed it accordingly, especially in connection with the fact recorded in John xix. 34, and with the "loud cry," indicating the pangs of an intolerable anguish, to a rupture of the vessels of the heart. Simple exhaustion, as the consequence of the long vigil, the agony in the garden, the mocking and the scourging, would be, perhaps, almost as natural an explanation.

Gave up the ghost.—Better, *yielded up His spirit*. All four Evangelists agree in using this or some like expression, instead of the simpler form, "He died." It is as though they dwelt on the act as, in some sense, voluntary, and connected it with the words in which He had commended His spirit to the Father (Luke xxiii. 46).

⁽³⁸⁾ **The veil of the temple was rent in twain.**—Better, *the veil of the sanctuary*, or, if we do not alter the word, we must remember that it is the veil that divided the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies that is here meant. The fact, which the high priest would naturally have wished to conceal, and which in the nature of the case could not have been seen by any but the sons of Aaron, may have been reported by the "great multitude of the priests" who "became obedient to the faith" (Acts vi. 7). The Evan-

gelist's record of it is all the more significant, as he does not notice, and apparently, therefore, did not apprehend, the symbolic import of the fact. That import we learn indirectly from the Epistle to the Hebrews. The priests had, as far as they had power, destroyed the true Temple (comp. John ii. 19); but in doing so they had robbed their own sanctuary of all that made it holy. The true veil, as that which shrouded the Divine Glory from the eyes of men, was His own flesh, and through that He had passed, as the Forerunner of all who trusted in Him, into the sanctuary of Heaven. In St. Matthew's narrative (xxvii. 51—53) the rending of the veil is connected with an earthquake, with the opening of the rock-sepulchres, and with the appearance, after the Resurrection, of "many bodies of the saints that slept."

⁽³⁹⁾ **When the centurion.**—St. Mark, after his manner, uses the actual Latin word, St. Matthew the Greek equivalent.

Truly this man was the Son of God.—St. Luke's report softens down the witness thus borne into "Truly this Man was righteous." As reported by St. Matthew (xxvii. 54) and St. Mark the words probably meant little more than that. We must interpret them from the stand-point of the centurion's knowledge, not from that of Christian faith, and to him the words "a Son of God" (without the

this man was the Son of God. ⁽⁴⁰⁾ There were also women looking on afar off:

among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less

definite article) would convey the idea of one who was God-like in those elements of character which are most divine—righteousness, and holiness, and love. The form of expression was naturally determined by the words which he had heard bandied to and fro as a taunt (Matt. xxvii. 43); and the centurion felt that the words, as he understood them, were true, and not false, of the Sufferer whose death he had witnessed. That the words might have such a sense in the lips even of a devout Jew, we find in the Language of a book probably contemporary, and possibly written with some remote reference to our Lord's death—the so-called *Wisdom of Solomon* (Wisd. ii. 13, 16–18). In the last of these verses, it will be noted, the terms “just man” and “son of God” appear as almost interchangeable.

⁽⁴⁰⁾ **There were also women looking on afar off.**—The group was obviously distinct from that of “the daughters of Jerusalem,” of Luke xxiii. 28, but was probably identical with that mentioned in Luke viii. 2, 3, as accompanying our Lord in many of His journeyings.

Mary Magdalene.—This is the first mention of the name in St. Mark. The most natural explanation of it is that she came from the town of Magdala, or Magadan (the reading of the chief MSS. in Matt. xv. 39), not far from Tiberias, on the western side of the Sea of Galilee. Another but less probable etymology explains the name as meaning “Mary

(or Miriam) of the braided hair.” The two prominent facts in her history prior to those which connect her with the Resurrection are (1) that our Lord had cast “seven devils out of her” (Mark xvi. 9; Luke viii. 2)—i.e., had freed her from some specially aggravated form of demoniacal possession—and that she followed Him and ministered to him of her substance. There are no sufficient grounds for believing that she was identical either (1) with Mary the sister of Lazarus, or (2) with the “woman which was a sinner” of Luke vii. 37.

Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses.—In St. Matt. xxvii. 56 the names of the two sons are given without any epithet. Here James is described as “the Less” (better, *the Little*) the adjective distinguishing the former from James the son of Zebedee, and possibly also from James the son of Alphæus.

The mother may, however, have been identical with the wife of Clopas (possibly another form of Alphæus) mentioned in John xix. 25 as standing near the cross with the mother of the Lord, and according to a natural though not necessary, construction of the words, described as her sister. In this case, the word “Little” would attach to the son of that sister, and was probably given on account of his being, like Zacchæus (Luke xix. 3), “little of stature.” Whether the two names, which occur also in the list of the “brethren of the Lord”

and of Joses, and Salome;
 (41) (who also, when he was
 in Galilee, followed him,^a
 and ministered unto him;) and
 many other women which came
 up with him unto Jerusalem.

b Matt.
 27. 57.
 a Luke
 8. 3.

(42) And now when the
 even was come,^b because it
 was the preparation, that
 is, the day before the
 sabbath, (43) Joseph of Ari-
 mathæa, an honourable
 counsellor, which also

(Mark vi. 3), indicate that she was the mother of those brethren, is a point which we have no evidence to settle. The presumption seems to me against it, as on this supposition the "brethren" would be identical with the two sons of Alphæus in the list of the Twelve, a view which we have seen reason to reject (see Note on chap. iv. 31.)

Salome.—St. Matthew (xxvii. 56) describes her as "the mother of Zebedee's children," and she, and not the wife of Clopas, may, on a perfectly tenable construction of John xix. 25, have been identical with the sister of our Lord's mother there mentioned. St. Luke notes the fact that with the women who had followed Him from Jerusalem, were those whom He describes as "all His acquaintance," i.e., friends and disciples of, or at that time in, Jerusalem (xxiii. 49).

(41) **Who also . . . ministered unto him.**—The verse has the interest of incidentally confirming the formal statement of Luke viii. 1.

(42) **The preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath.**—The explanation, like that in chap. vii. 2, 3, is characteristic of St. Mark, as writing for Gentile readers. It fixes, with hardly the shadow of a doubt, the meaning of the word "preparation," as used in Matt. xxvii. 62, as meaning a preparation for the Sabbath, not for

the Passover. It is used in this sense by Josephus (*Ant.* xvi. 6, § 2) in a document which purports to be an edict of Augustus. So in early ecclesiastical Greek, and even in Latin, *Paraskeuê* became the received equivalent for Friday.

(43) **Joseph of Arimathæa.**—The place so named was probably identical with the Ramah of 1 Sam. i. 19, the birthplace of the prophet. In 1 Sam. i. 1 the name is given in its uncontracted form as Ramathaim-zophim, and in the LXX. version it appears throughout as Armathaim, in Josephus as Armatha, in 1 Macc. xi. 34 as Ramathem. It was a city of the Jews, in the narrower sense in which that word meant the people of Judæa (Luke xxiii. 51). The site is more or less conjectural, but if we identify the Ramah, or Ramathaim, of 1 Sam. i. 1 with the modern *Nebby Samuel*, about four miles north-west of Jerusalem, we have a position which sufficiently fits in with the circumstances of the history. Of Joseph we are told by St. Matthew (xxvii. 57) that he "also was a disciple of Jesus;" here that he was "an honourable counsellor," i.e., a member of the Sanhedrin, and that he was looking for the kingdom of God; by St. Luke (xxiii. 50, 51), that he was "a good man and a just" (see Rom. v. 7 for the distinction between the two

waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus.

⁽⁴⁴⁾ And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling *unto him* the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any

while dead. ⁽⁴⁵⁾ And when he knew *it* of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph. ⁽⁴⁶⁾ And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock,

words); by St. John (xix. 38), that he was "a disciple, but secretly for fear of the Jews." He was apparently a man of the same class and type of character as Nicodemus, who, as St. John records (xix. 39) now acted with him, respecting our Lord as a man, admiring Him as a teacher, half-believing in Him as the Christ, and yet, till now, shrinking from confessing Him before men. For us the name has the interest of being one of the few New Testament names connected with our own country. He was sent, it was said, by Philip (the Apostle) to Britain. There, in the legend which mediæval chroniclers delighted to tell, he founded the Church of Glastonbury; and the staff which he stuck into the ground took root and brought forth leaves and flowers, and became the parent of all the Glastonbury thorns from that day to this. We have to place the piercing of the side (narrated by St. John only, xix. 31—37), before Joseph's application.

Went in boldly.—Better, *waxed bold, and went in*. There is an implied contrast between this boldness now and his previous timidity. Assuming the death of our Lord to have been soon after

the ninth hour (3 P.M.), Joseph would seem to have hastened at once to the Prætorium, and asked Pilate's permission to inter the body. In his compliance with the petition we trace, as before, a lingering reverence and admiration. As far as he can, he will help the friends, and not the foes of the righteous Sufferer. Officially, of course, he could hardly refuse to comply with the request of the latter that he would send a guard to keep watch over the sepulchre (Matt. xxvii. 62—66.) Joseph's going into the Prætorium may be noted, in connection with John, xviii. 28, as indicating that he had already eaten his Passover. (Comp. Note on verse 21.)

⁽⁴⁴⁾ **And Pilate marvelled.**—The wonder of Pilate and his calling the centurion (the article points to his being the same that had been mentioned in verse 39), are peculiar to St. Mark. Often men lingered on the cross for a whole day or more. St. John reports that the two robbers had their knees broken, by way of a *coup de grâce*.

⁽⁴⁶⁾ **He bought fine linen.**—Better, *a fine linen sheet*. The word for "linen cloth," *Sindôn*, points, according to different derivations, to a Sidonian or an

and rolled a stone unto
the door of the sepulchre.

(47) And Mary Magdalene

and Mary *the mother of*
Josès beheld where he was
laid.

Indian fabric. It was probably of the nature of muslin rather than linen, and seems to have been specially used by the Egyptians for folding round their mummies, but sometimes also for the sheet in which a man slept (Herod. ii. 86, 95). In the New Testament it appears only in the account of our Lord's burial (here and in Matt. xxvii. 59; Luke xxiii. 53), and in the strange narrative of chap. xiv. 51. The fact that it was bought just before the Sabbath began is peculiar to St. Mark.

Laid him in a sepulchre.—

The garden, or orchard, was therefore the property of Joseph (see Note on verse 22). All the first three Gospels dwell on the fact of its not being, as so many graves were, a natural cavern, but cut, and, as St. Luke's word implies, to some extent, smoothed and polished. It was, St. John records (xix. 41), a "new sepulchre" in which no corpse had as yet been laid. Like almost all Eastern graves, it was an opening made in the vertical face of the rock. Neither of the two localities which have been identified with the sepulchre (see Note as above) presents this feature, and, so far as this is not an argument against the identity of either with the actual tomb, we must assume that the rock has been so cut and shaped in the course of centuries as to lose its original form. St. John (xix. 39) notes the singularly interesting fact that Nicodemus shared with Joseph in these

reverential offices. The hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes which he brought must have been bought beforehand, and may have been stored up from the time when he knew that the leading members of the Council had resolved upon the death of Jesus, *i.e.*, shortly after Lazarus had been raised to life (John xi. 53). St. Luke and St. John give the reason for the speed with which the entombment was hurried on. It was now near sunset. The Sabbath was on the point of beginning, and there was no alternative but that of leaving the body on the cross for another twenty-four hours, and this, though common enough as a Roman practice (which usually, indeed, left the corpse for birds of prey to feed on), would have shocked Jewish feeling, especially at the Paschal season, as a violation of their law (Deut. xxi. 23. In the history of Rizpah, however (2 Sam. xxi. 10), we have an instance of prolonged exposure.

(47) **Mary the mother of Josès.**—In Matt. xxvii. 61 she is described simply as "the other Mary." The words imply that they remained by the cross while the body was taken down, and watched its entombment: then returning to the house where they lodged, they prepared their spices and ointment before the Sabbath began, for a more complete embalmment, so that they might be ready by the earliest hour of dawn on the first day of the week (Luke xxiii. 56).

CHAPTER XVI.—

(1) And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the *mother* of James, and Salome, had

A.D. 33.

^a Luke
24. 1;
John
20. 1.

bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. (2) And very early in the morning the first day of the week,^a they came

XVI.

(1) It will probably help the student to place before him, in their right order, the recorded appearances of the Lord Jesus after His resurrection:—

(1.) To Mary Magdalene, John xx. 14; Mark xvi. 9.

(2.) To Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, Matt. xxviii. 9.

(3.) To Peter, Luke xxiv. 34, 1 Cor. xv. 5.

(4.) To Cleopas and another disciple at Emmaus, Luke xxiv. 13—35.

(5.) To the eleven, or more strictly the ten, Apostles, at Jerusalem, Mark xvi. 14; Luke xxiv. 36; John xx. 19.

(6.) To the eleven Apostles at Jerusalem, John xx. 26.

(7.) To the disciples—five named, and others—by the Sea of Galilee, John xxi. 1—24.

(8.) To the eleven on a mountain in Galilee, Matt. xxviii. 16; Mark xvi. 15.

(9.) To the five hundred brethren, possibly identical with (8), 1 Cor. xv. 6.

(10.) To James, probably the brother of the Lord, 1 Cor. xv. 7.

(11.) To the eleven at Jerusalem before the Ascension, Mark xvi. 19, 20; Luke xxiv. 50; Acts i. 3—12.

And when the Sabbath was past.—“Mary the mother of James” (not, as in chap. xv. 40, of “James and Josès”) answers, as before, to the “other Mary” of

Matt. xxviii. 1. “Salome” appears, as before, in St. Mark only.

Had bought sweet spices.—More accurately *bought*, the tense being the aorist and not the pluperfect. The shops in Jerusalem would naturally be opened as soon as the Sabbath was over, *i.e.*, at sunset on the Saturday, and the two Marys, not knowing, probably, of what had been done by Joseph and Nicodemus, were anxious to supplement the hasty burial of the previous afternoon.

(2) At the rising of the sun.—Literally, *when the sun had risen*.

There seems at first a slight discrepancy between this and St. Matthew’s “while it was yet dark.” A morning haze, however, or the partial continuance of the gloom which had shrouded the city on the day of the crucifixion may well be thought of as harmonising the two accounts. The order of facts appears to have been as follows:—(1.) Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, the mother of James the Little, watched the burial just before the Sabbath began on the evening of the day of the crucifixion. (2.) They stayed at home during the twenty-four hours of the Sabbath. (3.) On the evening of that day (the Sabbath-rest being over) they bought spices for the embalmment. (4.) At earliest dawn, say about 4 A.M., they set out to make their way to the sepulchre, and they reached it when the sun had risen (Mark xvi. 2).

unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. ⁽³⁾ And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? ⁽⁴⁾ And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great. ⁽⁵⁾ And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white

^a John
20. 11.

^b Matt.
26. 32.

garment;^a and they were affrighted. ⁽⁶⁾ And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. ⁽⁷⁾ But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.^b

⁽³⁾ And they said among themselves . . .—Literally, *and they were saying to themselves*. The words were on the point of rising to their lips as they looked up and saw the stone rolled away.

⁽⁴⁾ For it was very great.—The words have been explained as giving the reason for their previous question, but it seems more natural to see in them St. Mark's explanation of his having used the word "rolled away" instead of saying, simply, "taken away" or "moved on one side."

⁽⁵⁾ A young man sitting on the right side.—So St. Mark describes the form which St. Matthew (xxviii. 1) simply calls an "angel of the Lord." As in Acts i. 10, this seems to have been the ordinary form of the angelophanies of the New Testament. There is no trace in them of the wings in which artists have delighted, and in outward appearance the angel must have seemed almost as one of the young Levites who ministered in the Temple.

⁽⁶⁾ Be not affrighted.—The words agree substantially with

those in Matt. xxviii. 5—8, but omit the fuller appeal to the women to remember the words which their Lord had spoken while He was yet with them in Galilee.

He is not here.—It is not given to us to fix the precise moment when the grave was opened and the risen Lord came forth from it, but the indications point to the time before or about sunrise. There was an obvious fitness in the symbolism of the Resurrection of the Son of Righteousness coinciding with the natural "day-spring." (Comp. Luke i. 78.)

Behold the place.—Comp. the description in John xx. 5, 6, of the "linen clothes," or bandages, that had swathed the limbs, the napkin, or *sudarium*, that had veiled the face.

The report in St. Matthew (xxviii. 6, 7) nearly coincides with this. St. Luke is somewhat fuller (xxiv. 5—7), introducing the question, "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" and a more detailed reference to our Lord's prophecies of His resurrection

(8) And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid.

(9) Now when Jesus was

a John
20. 14.

b Luke
8. 2.

risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene,^a out of whom he had cast seven devils.^b (10) And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned

(8) They trembled and were amazed.—Literally, *trembling and amazement seized them*. The discrepancies, such as they are, at any rate show that the narratives of the Gospels were independent of each other. The probable sequence of events was that Mary Magdalene ran eagerly after finding the sepulchre empty, to tell Peter and John (John xx. 2), leaving the other Mary and Joanna (Luke xxiv. 10), and then followed in the rear of the two disciples (John xx. 2). Then when they had left, the Lord showed Himself first to her (John xx. 14), and then to the others (Matt. xxviii. 9), whom she had by that time joined, and then they all hastened together to tell the rest of the disciples.

(9—20) Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week.—The history of the verses that follow is in every way remarkable. They are not found in two of the oldest MSS.—the Sinaitic and the Vatican—are marked as doubtful in many others, and are wanting in some versions. In the Vatican MS. there is a blank space left between verse 8 and the beginning of St. Luke, as though the writer had suspended his work, feeling that “they were afraid” could not be the true ending of the Gospel, and waited for materials. The absence was noticed

by Jerome (*Epist. ad Hedibiam* (Épp. cxx. qu. 3), who says that “nearly all the Greek texts omit them.” Eusebius (*ad Marinum*) states the same fact as true of “the correct MSS.,” and no reference is made to them in the tables of parallel passages which were constructed for reference by Eusebius and Ammonius. On the other hand, they are referred to by Irenæus (about A.D. 170), and are found in the Alexandrian and Cambridge MSS., and in twelve other uncials which are nearly (some say quite) as old as the two which omit them. They are found in all the cursive MSS., though occasionally with notes that they were not found in some. They are quoted freely by writers from the second century onwards, and appear to have been used from an early period, the third, or, possibly, the second century, in the Lectonaries of the Eastern Church. When we turn to the internal evidence we find that the narrative, which up to this point had followed closely in the footsteps of St. Matthew, now becomes a very condensed epitome of St. John’s record of our Lord’s appearance to Mary Magdalene (xx. 11—18), of St. Luke’s account of the journey to Emmaus (xxiv. 13—35), of the appearance to the ten disciples in John xx. 19—25 and Luke xxiv.

and wept. ⁽¹¹⁾ And they, |
when they had heard that |

| he was alive, and had been
| seen of her, believed not.

36—43, of the mission of the eleven reported in Matt. xxviii. 16—20, of the Ascension as given by St. Luke xxiv. 50—53, and so far presents the character of a compilation from those narratives. We find further that it contains not fewer than seventeen words and phrases which are not found elsewhere in St. Mark. Impressions as to style are, of course, always in some degree subjective, but it is believed that most readers will agree with Tregelles, Tischendorf, and others, in recognising at least a very perceptible difference in the phraseology of these verses. Four explanations of these facts are possible. We may assume (1) that the verses were actually written by St. Mark, and that in the course of time—probably in the second or third century—a mutilated copy came into the hands of scribes who perpetuated the result of an accident in the MSS. which omit the verses, while the main line of tradition went on unbroken. (2) We may suppose that the writer of the Gospel wrote two copies of it, leaving one unfinished, ending at verse 8; that this passed into the hands of persons by whom it was copied as complete, and so became the archetype of the MSS. in which the verses are wanting; while those that contain the subsequent verses were made from a more perfect text, written by St. Mark himself. (3) We may believe the writer of the Gospel was interrupted in his work by persecution or other hindrance, and had to leave it unfinished. On this hypothesis a curious parallel would be found

in the Bodleian MS. of Wycliff's Bible, which ends in the middle of the Epistle of Baruch, the translator, Nicholas de Hereford, having been called to London by a citation from Archbishop Arundel. (4) We may infer that the Gospel, having been originally completed by the writer, was in some way, by accident or design, mutilated; that as such it was reproduced faithfully by some transcribers, while others thought it better to give it a completion of some kind, by condensing what they found in the other Gospels. Of the four hypotheses the last seems, to the present writer, the most probable. Among recent critics the authority of Griesbach, Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles, Alford, and Wordsworth, and many others, is against attributing the verses to St. Mark's pen, while they are defended by Scrivener, Ellicott, Morison, and Burgon, the last of whom has presented all that can be said for them in a masterly and exhaustive volume which, whether we accept its conclusions or not, cannot be studied without interest.

⁽⁹⁻¹¹⁾ **First to Mary Magdalene.**—A fuller account is given in John xx. 11—18, but we note that St. Mark's account of her as one from whom Jesus "had cast out seven devils" is not from St. John, but from Luke viii. 2. It would have been natural, of course, to have mentioned the fact on the first occurrence of her name in verse 1, and this is so far in favour of the view that the verses that follow were not by

(12) After that he appeared in another form unto two of them,^a as they walked, and went into the country.

(13) And they went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them.

(14) Afterward he appeared unto the eleven^b as they sat at meat,ⁱ and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.

c Matt. 28. 19.

a Luke 24. 13.

d John 12. 48.

b Luke 24. 36;

John 20. 19.

l Or, together.

e Acts 5. 16.

f Acts 2. 4.

g Acts 28. 5.

(15) And he said unto them,^e Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. (16) He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.^d (17) And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils;^f they shall speak with new tongues;^f (18) they shall take up serpents;^g and if they drink any deadly thing, it

the same writer as the rest of the Gospel.

(12) After that he appeared in another form.—This obviously refers to the appearance of the two disciples who were journeying to Emmaus, of which we have a much fuller report in Luke xxiv. 13—35.

(14) Afterward he appeared unto the eleven.—This also appears as if it had been taken from St. Luke's report (xxiv. 36—43), combined with that in Matt. xxviii. 16—20.

There is much, however, that is so distinct in St. Mark's report as to suggest the thought that it may have referred to a different occasion.

(15) Preach the gospel to every creature.—Better, *to the whole creation*. The universality of the word is, of course, limited by the nature of the case.

(16) He that believeth not shall be damned.—Better, *shall be condemned*. The Greek word does not necessarily imply the idea

of irreversible endless condemnation which has come to be attached to the English one, and in some passages (1 Cor. xi. 32) is even contrasted with condemnation.

(17) They shall speak with new tongues.—This is noticeable as being the only distinct reference in the Gospels to the form of the Pentecostal gift. The promise of the Spirit itself had been prominent, however, throughout our Lord's teaching (Luke xi. 13; John xiv. 17, 26), and appears from Acts i. 8 to have been specially renewed between the Resurrection and Ascension. On the nature of the gift itself see Acts ii. 4, x. 46, xix. 6; 1 Cor. xii. 10, xiv. 4—26.

(18) They shall take up serpents.—The instance of St. Paul at Melita is the only recorded example of the kind (Acts xxviii. 1—6). Power over "serpents and scorpions" had, it will be remembered, been given before (Luke x. 19).

If they drink any deadly

shall not hurt them ; they shall lay hands on the sick,^a and they shall recover.

⁽¹⁹⁾ So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven,^b and sat on the

^a Acts
28. 8.

^b Luke
24. 51.
^c Heb. 2. 4.

right hand of God. ⁽²⁰⁾ And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following.^c Amen.

thing . . .—Of this there is no recorded instance in the New Testament, but it finds an illustration in the tradition of the poisoned cup which was offered to St. John, related by Isidore of Seville (*De Morte Sanctorum*).

^(19, 20) So then after the Lord had spoken.—Here again the narrative follows in the footsteps of Luke xxiv. 53. St. Matthew, it will be remembered, gives no account of the Ascension. St. Mark and St. Luke record it briefly. St. John implies it in his report of our Lord's words (vi. 62 ; xx. 17),

but does not narrate it. In Acts i. 3—11 it is narrated with greater fulness. In the Epistles it is everywhere assumed (Rom. viii. 34 ; 1 Cor. xv. 25 ; Eph. i. 20 ; Phil. ii. 9 ; Col. iii. 1 ; 1 Tim. iii. 16 ; Heb. viii. 1 ; 1 Pet. i. 11 ; iii. 22).

The form of the last two verses, the use of the "Lord" instead of Jesus, suggests the thought of their being a later addition to the original records of our Lord's life and teaching, after that had become the almost uniform way in which the Church spoke of her Divine Head.

APPENDIX

EXCURSUS A.—DEMONIAC POSSESSION. (Matt. viii. 28.)

(1.) As to the word, the Greek *δαίμων* (the "knowing," or the "divider") appears in Homer as interchangeable with *Θεός* (God). In the mythology of Hesiod (*Works and Days*, l. 108) we have the first downward step, and the *δαίμονες* are the departed spirits of the men who lived in the first golden age of the world. They are the good genii of Greek religion, averters of evil, guardians of mortal men. The next stage introduced the neuter of the adjective derived from *δαίμων* as something more impersonal, and *τὸ δαιμόνιον* was used by Plato as something "between God and man, by which the former communicates with the latter" (*Symp.* p. 202), and in this sense Socrates spoke of the inward oracle whose warning he obeyed, as his *δαίμόνιον*, and was accordingly accused of bringing in the worship of new *δαίμόνια*, whom the State had not recognised. The fears of men led them, however, to connect these unknown intermediate agents with evil as well as good. The *δαίμων* of the Greek tragedians is the *evil* genius of a family, as in the case of that of Agamemnon. (*Æsch. Agam.* 1444-1456) A man is said to be under its power when he is swayed by some uncontrollable frenzied passion that hurries him into guilt and misery.

Such were the meanings that had gathered round the word when the Greek translators of the Old Testa-

ment entered on their task. They, as was natural, carefully avoided using it in any connection that would have identified it with the God of Israel. It appears in Ps. xc. 3, where the English version gives "destruction;" in Deut. xxxii. 17, and Ps. cvi. 37, where the English version has "devils," and in this sense it accordingly passed into the language of the Hellenistic Jews, and so into that of the writers of the Gospels. So St. Paul speaks of the gods whom the heathen worshipped as *δαίμόνια* (1 Cor. x. 20).

(2.) As to the phenomena described, the belief of later Judaism ascribed to "demons," in the sense which the word has thus acquired, many of the more startling forms of bodily and mental suffering which the language of modern thought groups under the general head of "disease." Thus, in the history of Tobit, the daughter of Raguel is possessed by the evil spirit Asmodeus, and he slays her seven bridegrooms (Tobit iii. 8). Or passing on to the Gospel records, we find demoniac agency the cause of dumbness (Matt. ix. 32), blindness (Matt. xii. 22), epilepsy (Mark ix. 17-27), or (as here, and Mark v. 1-5) insanity. To "have a devil" is interchangeable with "being mad" (John vii. 20; viii. 48; x. 20, and probably Matt. xi. 18). And this apparently was but

part of a more general view, which saw in all forms of disease the work, directly or indirectly, of Satan, as the great adversary of mankind. Our Lord went about "healing all that were oppressed of the devil" (Acts x. 38). "Satan had bound" for eighteen years the woman who was crippled by a spirit of infirmity" (Luke xiii. 16). And these "demons" are described as "unclean spirits" (Matt. x. 1; xii. 43, *et al.*) acting under a "ruler" or "prince," who is popularly known by the name of Beelzebub, the old Philistine deity of Ekron, and whom our Lord identifies with Satan (Matt. xii. 24—26). The Talmud swarms with allusions to such demons as lurking in the air, in food, in clothing, and working their evil will on the bodies or the souls of men. St. Paul, though he refers only once to "demons" in this sense, and then apparently as the authors of false doctrines claiming divine authority, but coming really from "seducing spirits" (1 Tim. iv. 1), seems to see in some forms at least of bodily disease the permitted agency of Satan, as in the case of the chastisement inflicted on the incestuous Corinthian (1 Cor. v. 5; 2 Cor. ii. 11), his own "thorn in the flesh" (2 Cor. xii. 7), and possibly in other like hindrances to his work (1 Thess. ii. 18).

(3.) The belief bore its natural fruit among the Jews of our Lord's time. The work of the exorcist became a profession, as in the case of the sons of Sceva at Ephesus (Acts xix. 13). Charms and incantations were used, including the more sacred forms of the divine name. The Pharisees appear to have claimed the power as one of the privileges belonging to their superior holiness (Matt. xii. 27).

Josephus narrates that a herb grew at Machærus, the root of which had the power of expelling demons (whom he defines as the spirits of wicked men), and that he had himself beheld, in the presence of Vespasian, a man possessed with a demon, cured by a ring containing a root of like properties. As a proof of the reality of the dispossession, a vessel of water was placed at a little distance from the man, which was overthrown by the unseen demon as he passed out from the man's nostrils (*Wars*, vii. 6, § 3; *Ant.* viii. 2, § 5). The belief as to the demons being "the souls of the dead," lingered in the Christian Church, was accepted by Justin, who, coming from Samaria, probably received it from the Jews (*Apol.* I., i., p. 65), and was recognised as at least a common belief by Chrysostom (*De Lazaro*, I., p. 728).

(4.) Our Lord's treatment of the cases of men thus "possessed with demons" stands out partly as accepting the prevailing belief in its highest aspects, partly as contrasted with it. He uses no spells or charms, but does the work of casting out as by His own divine authority, "with a word." He delegates to the Twelve the power to "cast out demons," as well as to cure diseases (Matt. x. 8); and when the Seventy return with the report that the devils (*i.e.*, demons) were subject unto them in His name, He speaks of that result as a victory over Satan (Luke x. 17, 18). He makes the action of the demons the vehicle for a parable, in which first one and then eight demons are represented as possessing the same man (Matt. xii. 43—45). It may be noted that He nowhere speaks of them, in the language of the later

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current beliefs of Christendom, as identical with the "fallen angels," or as the souls of the dead, though they are evil spirits subject to the power of Satan.

(5.) It is obvious that many hard questions rise out of these facts. Does our Lord's indirect teaching stamp the popular belief with the seal of His authority? or did He, knowing it to be false, accommodate Himself to their belief, and speak in the only way men were able to understand of His own power to heal, teaching them as they were "able to hear it?" (Mark iv. 33). If we answer the former question in the affirmative, are we to believe that the fact of possession was peculiar to the time and country, and that the "demons" (either as the souls of the dead, or as evil angels) have since been restrained by the influence of Christendom or the power of Christ? or may we still trace their agency in the more obscure and startling phenomena of mental disease, in the *delirium tremens* of the drunkard, in the orgiastic frenzy of some Eastern religions, in homicidal or suicidal mania? And if we go as far as this, is it a true theory of disease

in general to assign it, in all cases, to the permitted agency of Satan? and how can we reconcile that belief either with the temper which receives sickness as "God's visitation," or with that which seeks out its mechanical or chemical causes? Wise and good men have answered these questions very differently, and it may be that we have not the *data* for an absolutely certain and exhaustive answer. It is well to remember, on the one hand, that to speak of the phenomena of the Gospel possessions as mania, hysteria, or the like, is to give them a name, but not to assign a cause—that science, let it push its researches into mental disease ever so far, has to confess at last that it stands in the presence of unknown forces, more amenable often to spiritual influences than to any medical treatment; and on the other, that our Lord came to rescue men from the thralldom of frenzy and disease, and so to prepare them for the higher work of spiritual renovation, rather than rudely to sweep away the traditional belief of the people as to their source, or to proclaim a new psychological theory.

EXCURSUS B: THE DAY OF THE CRUCIFIXION OF OUR LORD

(1.) The narratives of the first Three Gospels, and that of the Fourth, agree in the statement that on the night that immediately preceded the betrayal or the crucifixion of our Lord, He and His disciples met together at a supper. As to what that supper was they seem at first to differ. The first Three agree in speaking of it as the first day

(Matthew and Mark), or *the day* (Luke), of the feast known as that of unleavened bread, the day when "the Passover must be slain" (Mark, Luke). The disciples ask where they are to prepare the Passover. They are sent to the owner of the upper room, where they are met with the message that their Lord purposes to eat the Passover

there. When they arrived they "made ready the Passover" (Matthew, Mark, Luke). As they begin he tells them that He has eagerly desired to eat that Passover with them before He suffered (Luke xxii. 15). At a certain stage of the meal, which corresponded with the later ritual of the Paschal Supper, He commands them to see in the bread and the cup which he then blessed the memorial feasts of the New Covenant. The impression, *primâ facie*, left by all the Three, is that our Lord and His disciples partook, at the usual time, of the Paschal Supper. In St. John, on the other hand, there is no record of the institution of this memorial feast. The supper is introduced as "before the feast of the Passover" (John xiii. 1). When Judas leaves the room the other disciples think that he is sent to buy what was needed for the feast (John xiii. 29). When the priests are before Pilate they shrink from entering into the Prætorium, lest they should be defiled, and so be unable to eat the Passover (John xviii. 28). The impression, *primâ facie*, left by St. John's Gospel is that our Lord's death coincided with the sacrifice of the Paschal lamb; that left by the Three is that the Paschal lamb had been sacrificed the previous evening.

(2.) The difference has been regarded by many critics as altogether irreconcilable, and conclusions have been drawn from it unfavourable to the authority of one or both the narratives. Those who look on the Gospel of St. John as the work of a writer of the second century, see in this discrepancy a desire to give a sanction to the local usage of the Church of Ephesus, or to force upon his readers, as in his citation

of "a bone of Him shall not be broken" (John xix. 36), the correspondence between the Passover and the death of Christ. Those who accept the Gospel as St. John's wholly or in part, see in his narrative a correction, designed or undesigned, of the narrative of the Three, and look on that narrative accordingly as more or less untrustworthy. Some even of those who shrink from these conclusions have been content to rest in the conviction that we have no adequate *data* for the solution of the problem.

Some minor difficulties gather round the main question. It was not likely, it has been urged, that on the very night of the Passover the high priests should have taken the counsel and the action that led to the capture in Gethsemane; nor that on the day that followed, "a day of holy convocation" (Ex. xii. 16), they should have sat in judgment, and appeared as accusers before Pilate and Herod; nor that Simon of Cyrene should have come from the country (Mark xv. 21); nor that Judas should be supposed to have been sent, if it were the Paschal Supper, to make purchases of any kind—as if the shops in Jerusalem would on such a night be open (John xiii. 29).

The day of the Crucifixion is described by all four Evangelists as "the preparation," which it is assumed must mean "the preparation for the Passover." In St. John (xix. 14) it is definitely spoken of as "the preparation of the Passover."

(3.) Some solutions of the problem, which rest on insufficient evidence, may be briefly noticed and dismissed. (a) It has been supposed that our Lord purposely

anticipated the legal Paschal Supper, and that the words "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer" (Luke xxii. 15), were an intimation of that purpose. Against this, however, there is the fact that the disciples, who could have no such anticipatory purpose, ask the question where they are to prepare, and then actually prepare the Passover as a thing of course, and that the Three Gospels, as we have seen, all speak of the Last Supper as being actually on the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, which is the Passover. (b) It has been conjectured that the Galilean usage as to the Passover may have varied from that of Judæa; but of this there is not the shadow of evidence, nor is it likely that the priests who had to take part in the slaying of the Paschal lambs would have acquiesced in what would seem to them a glaring violation of their ritual. (c) Stress has been laid on the fact that in the later ritual of the Passover week a solemn meal was eaten on the day that followed the sacrifice of the Paschal lamb, which was known as the *Chagigah* (= festivity, or festive meal). This also was a feast upon flesh that had been offered in sacrifice, and it has been thought by some who seek to reconcile the four narratives, that this was the feast for which Judas was supposed to be ordered to make provision, that this was "the Passover," the prospect of which led the high priests to keep clear of entering under the roof of the Prætorium. In many ways this seems, at first, an adequate solution of the difficulty, but there is no evidence that the term "the Passover," which had such a strictly definite significance, was ever ex-

tended to include this subordinate festivity.

(4.) It remains to examine the narratives somewhat more closely and with an effort to realise, as well as we can, the progress of the events which they narrate. As a preliminary stage in the inquiry, we may note two or three facts which cannot well be excluded from consideration. (a) The narrative of the first Three Gospels, probably independent of each other, represents, on any assumption, the widespread tradition of the churches of Judæa, of Syria, and of Asia, of St. Matthew, St. Peter, and St. Paul. It is antecedently improbable that that tradition could have been wrong in so material a fact. (b) The Fourth Gospel, whether by St. John or a later writer, must, on any assumption, have been written when that tradition had obtained possession of well-nigh all the churches. It is antecedently improbable either that such a writer should contradict the tradition without knowing that he did so, or that, if he knew it, he should do so silently and without stating that his version of the facts was more accurate than that commonly received. It is at least a probable explanation of his omitting to narrate the institution of the Lord's Supper that the record of that institution was recited whenever the disciples met to break bread at Ephesus as elsewhere (1 Cor. xi. 23—26), and that he felt, therefore, that it was better to record what others had left untold than to repeat that with which men were already familiar. If he was not conscious of any contradiction, then his mode of narrating—simply and without emphasis noting facts as they occurred—was natural enough.

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(5.) It remains to be seen whether there is, after all, any real discrepancy. Let us picture to ourselves—assuming for a time that the Last Supper was the Paschal meal—what was passing in Jerusalem on the afternoon of that 14th of Nisan. The Passover lamb was, according to the law (Ex. xii. 6; Lev. xxiii. 5; Num. ix. 3, 5), to be slain “between the two evenings.” The meaning of the formula is not certain. If, as some have supposed, it meant between the evening of the 14th and that of the 15th of Nisan, it gives a space of twenty-four hours within which the lamb might be slain and eaten, and then the whole apparent contradiction between the two narratives disappears. It was open to the disciples to eat their Passover on the 14th of Nisan, to the priests to eat theirs before sunset on the 15th. The occurrence, however, of the same expression in the rules as to the daily evening sacrifice (Ex. xxix. 39, 41; Num. xxviii. 4) excludes this interpretation, and it seems more probable that it covered the period that preceded and followed the setting of the sun. (Comp. Deut. vi. 2.) Looking to the prominence given to the ninth hour (3 P.M.), by its connection with the evening sacrifice and prayer (Acts iii. 1), it would be probable enough that the slaughter of the Paschal lambs would begin at that hour, and this conclusion is expressly confirmed by Josephus, who states that they were slain from the ninth to the eleventh hour, *i.e.*, from 3 to 5 P.M. (*Wars*, vi. 9, § 3). It is clear, however, that the process would take up the whole of that time, and would tend to stretch beyond it. Josephus (*ut supra*) reckons the number of lambs that had to be sacrificed at 270,000.

Some were certain to begin their Paschal meal two hours before the others.

(6.) Everything indicates that the disciples were among the earliest applicants for the priests’ assistance. The Galileans abstained from work, as a rule, on the feast-day more rigidly than the dwellers in Judæa, and this would naturally lead to their making their preparations early. Peter and John are, accordingly, sent to prepare “when the day came.” They get the room ready. They hasten, we may believe, to the Court of the Temple with the lamb. They sit down to their meal “at evening,” *i.e.*, about sunset, or 6 P.M. (Matt. xxvi. 20; Mark xiv. 27; Luke xxii. 14). It was in the nature of the case certain that the priests would be the last to leave the courts of the Temple, where they had to wait till the last lamb was offered, to burn the fat and offer incense, and cleanse the Temple, and purify themselves by immersion from the blood of the sacrifices, and that their Paschal meal would, therefore, be the latest at Jerusalem. They could scarcely expect in any case to eat their Passover before 9 or 10 P.M.

Now let us turn to the upper room, in which our Lord and the disciples were assembled. At a comparatively early stage of the meal, before the fourth, or possibly before the third of the four cups of wine which belonged to the ritual of the feast, Judas leaves to do his traitor’s work. (John xiii. 30). He has reason to believe that his Master will go out that evening, as was His wont, to Gethsemane. He goes at once to the priests, say about 8 or 9 P.M., with the welcome tidings. The urgency of the

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case, the sacred duty of checking the false and blasphemous Prophet who called Himself the Son of God, the urgency of the policy which sought to prevent the tumult which might have been caused by an arrest in the day-time (Matt. xxvi. 5), are all reasons for immediate action. *The Paschal meal is postponed.* They will be able, by-and-by, to comply with the rule that it must be consumed before the morning (Ex. xii. 10). The guards are summoned, and sent on their errand, as they had been once before on the "great day" of the Feast of Tabernacles (John vii. 37—45). Messages are despatched to call the members of the Sanhedrin (or, at least, a sufficient number for the purpose) to the hurried meeting, which was held before dawn. Assume these facts, and all runs smoothly. When Judas leaves, the disciples, looking forward to the usual festive *Chagigah* on the following day, the *feast* as distinct from the *Passover*, suppose that he is gone to prepare for that, and there is no ground for thinking that at that hour the markets would be shut, or that lambs, and bread, and wine, might not be purchased, or, at least, ordered for the following day. When the priests, on the other hand, refused to enter into the *Prætorium*, "lest they should be defiled" (John xviii. 28), it was because they and they alone, perhaps, in all Jerusalem, had still to eat the *Passover* which others had eaten on the previous evening. Had their meal been due on the evening that followed the Crucifixion, their scruples would have been needless. They had but to wash, and wait till sunset, and they would have been purified from all

defilement. With them the case was more urgent. Probably even the pressure of hunger made them anxious to finish the untasted meal of the previous evening. It was then "early," say about 4 or 5 A.M. When Pilate gave his sentence it was "about the sixth hour," i.e. —assuming St. John to use the Roman reckoning of the hours— 6 A.M., or between 9 A.M. and noon, if he followed the Jewish reckoning. Then their work was done. As soon as they had left the matter in Pilate's hands *they could eat their Passover*, turning the supper into a breakfast. This they had time for while their Victim was being mocked by the Roman soldiers and led out to Calvary. When it was over, they were able to reappear between 9 A.M. and noon, and to bear their part in the mockings and blasphemies of the multitude (Matt. xxvii. 41; Mark xv. 31). The disciples, on the other hand, who had eaten their *Passover*, found nothing to hinder them (this is obviously true, at least, of the writer of the Fourth Gospel) from going into the *Prætorium*, hearing what passed between Pilate and his prisoner (John xviii. 33—40), and witnessing, it may be, the scourgings and the mockings. Joseph of Arimathea was not deterred by any fear of defilement from going to Pilate, for he too had, we must believe, eaten his *Passover* at the proper time (Matt. xxvii. 57).

(7.) So far, then, on this view all is natural and consistent. St. John omits the fact of the meal being the *Passover*, as he omits the institution of the Lord's Supper, because these were things that were familiar to every catechumen, and confines himself to points of detail or of teaching

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which the current tradition passed over. He is not conscious that he differs from that tradition at all, and therefore neither emphasises his difference, nor is careful to avoid the appearance of it. On the other hand, the assumption that the Passover followed the Crucifixion involves the almost incredible supposition that the chief priests could remain by the cross till 3 P.M., and then go to Pilate (John xix. 31) regardless of their previous scruples; that nearly the whole population of Jerusalem, men and women, instead of cleansing their houses from leaven and preparing for the Passover, were crowding to the scene of the Crucifixion; that Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathæa and the Marys were burying the body of Jesus, and so incurring, at the very hour of the Passover, or immediately before it, a ceremonial defilement which would have compelled them to postpone their Passover for another month (Num. ix. 10). They go, the first at least of them, to Pilate, and the visit is, it will be noted, recorded by the same Evangelist who recorded the scruples of the priests (John xix. 38), without any explanation of what, on the other theory, is the apparent inconsistency.

(8.) There remain only a few minor points above noticed. And (a) as to the *Preparation*. Here the answer lies on the surface. That name (*Paraskeuê*) was given to the day of the week, our Friday, the day before the Sabbath, and had absolutely nothing to do with any preparation for the Passover. The Gospels show this beyond the shadow of a doubt (Mark xv. 42; Matt. xxvii. 62; Luke xxiii. 54).

If any confirmation were wanted, it may be found in the fact that the name is applied in a Græco-Roman decree quoted by Josephus (*Ant.* xvi. 6, § 2) to the week-day which answers to our Friday. Even the phrase which seems most to suggest a different view, the "preparation of the Passover" in John xix. 14, does not mean more, on any strict interpretation, than the "Passover Friday," the Friday in the Passover week, and coming, therefore, before a Sabbath more solemn than others (John xix. 31). It may be noted further that the term *Paraskeuê* was adopted by the Church, Western as well as Eastern, as a synonym for the *Dies Veneris*, or Friday. (b) The supposed difficulty as to Simon of Cyrene is of the slightest possible character. There is nothing to indicate that he was coming from field-labour. And if he had eaten his Passover on the previous day, either in Jerusalem or its immediate neighbourhood, there was nothing either in law or custom to prevent his entering the city on the following morning. (c) The questions connected with the action of the priests, and the thoughts of the disciples as to the meaning of our Lord's command to Judas, have been already dealt with.

It remains, in submitting this explanation to the judgment of the thoughtful reader, that I should acknowledge my obligations to the exhaustive article on PASSOVER by the late Rev. S. Clark, M.A., in the *Dictionary of the Bible*, and to two articles on THE LAST SUPPER OF THE LORD, in vols. viii. and ix. of the *Contemporary Review*, by the Rev. Professor Milligan, D.D., of Aberdeen.

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